

"Solid, well-researched...to disregard her warnings would be a 'criminal act itself.'"

—Larry Kahaner, author of *Cults That Kill*

# THE NEW SATANISTS



A FORMER CULT MEMBER RIPS THE VEIL  
OF SECRECY OFF THE MOST FRIGHTENING  
CRIMINAL PHENOMENON OF OUR TIME

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# Introduction

Does the name Aleister Crowley mean anything to you? Have you ever heard of the ancient Egyptian god Set? The Golden Dawn? The Ordo Templi Orientis? Have you read the writings of J. K. Huysmans? Anton LaVey? Howard Phillips Lovecraft? Do you know what the *Necronomicon* is?

If you answered "no" to most of those questions, you're in the same position as I was in the summer of 1978, when I had my first real encounter with occultism in the person of Michael Aquino, founder of the satanic sect known as the Temple of Set. At the time, I knew virtually nothing about the occult or its subculture and had no interest in learning more. Yet, disarmed by my own naivete, I fell in love with a satanist—and saw the life I knew destroyed as a result.

Like myself, most people who are grappling with issues related to satanism, ritual abuse, and the like came across the problem unexpectedly. Police officers investigating cases of vandalism by Satan-obsessed teenagers, therapists whose patients disclose ritualized abuse, and journalists covering stories of occult-related crime have all found themselves suddenly thrust into contact with a bizarre sort of parallel universe. How well they learn to understand the rules that

govern this alien world determines how effectively they are able to deal with it.

In many ways, my experience was identical to that of other victims of the hundreds of manipulative, controlling organizations commonly referred to as cults. Frequently, people become entangled in cults because a friend, relative, or spouse is a member. Maintaining a close relationship with a cult-involved person frequently leads to involvement with the cult as well. As I discovered, the results can be disastrous. Yet, I am fortunate in that my experience with satanism did not involve violence or illegal activity. It cost me my marriage, my career, and my peace of mind, but I know that for many the price has been even higher. In the language of satanism-related investigations, the term *survivor* usually refers to people who have endured the most horrifying physical and psychological torture at the hands of highly secretive, criminal cultists.

I was drawn to Michael Aquino not because he was a satanist but in spite of it. In the normal course of events, I would have had no interest in joining a satanist "church." I was not—and am not—a religious believer, nor was I a spiritual "searcher," nor had I been intrigued by the occult fads that swept the culture during the 1960s and 1970s. I would have insisted that I had no weak spots that the leader of a satanist group could hook in to. But I did. I just wouldn't have believed what they were.

My attraction to Aquino's world was rooted in the lure of the mysterious and romantic, which is so much more interesting than the ordinary and conventional. Some satanist groups still recruit through crude appeals to those seeking to "sell their souls to the devil" in exchange for fortune and fame. But sophisticated organizations such as the Temple of Set are more likely to target prospective members through a shared interest in such exotic subjects as vampire lore or Egyptian mythology. Other, less innocent aspects of the cult's philosophy may be hidden from the novice until he or she has been

sufficiently conditioned, through psychological manipulation, to accept and rationalize questionable teachings and practices. As I discovered, in the course of such conditioning the most intimate part of one's emotional being is often abused and betrayed.

I was thirty-four when I met Michael Aquino. My husband and I had been together for nine years; our marriage was affectionate and companionable, although not passionately romantic. The summer that Michael Aquino cast a shadow over our lives had been one of my happiest. We had left our Greenwich Village apartment because I needed to escape the nonstop hassle of New York City and had moved into a pleasant home in a beautiful suburb. I enjoyed my career as a designer. (My surname, incidentally, has nothing to do with my cult involvement, but was my married and professional name.) I loved my life—but there was a part of me that remained emotionally vulnerable, and it was that window of vulnerability through which Aquino gained access.

One Sunday in August 1978, while shopping in a supermarket, I bought a science-fiction fan magazine containing a story by one Michael Aquino based on the movie *Star Wars*. I was captivated by the story's unusual twists and turns on the characters and events and by its strange, melancholy emotional tone, which touched the intensely romantic part of me that I rarely showed to others. In my ignorance, I passed right over the many occult references incorporated into the story, such as a statue modeled on the Egyptian god Set.

I steeped my imagination in that story for three months before I wrote to the author. Unfortunately for me, he wrote back, and we began a correspondence. Aquino was obviously flattered by my admiration, and I discovered that we shared many interests. He was intelligent and articulate, although his authoritarian politics and enthusiasm for philosophers such as Plato, Pythagoras, Hegel, and Nietzsche—and the way he ran on about the "Wagnerian" potential of the *Star Wars* series—made me uneasy. However, I was so thirsty for the

sort of emotional and imaginative communication that developed between us—an element missing from my otherwise happy marriage—that I couldn't see that this well was poisoned, although the water was already beginning to make me sick.

Early in 1979, in his third letter to me, Aquino informed me that he was the leader of the Temple of Set and a former priest of Anton LaVey's Church of Satan. I was startled. I knew virtually nothing about satanism. To me, satanists were people in horror movies who sacrificed virgins on altars, not urbane Ph.D. candidates with U.S. Army Reserve commissions. However, although I was not ready to admit it to myself, I was already halfway in love, and I could not bring myself to abandon this intense emotional attachment.

I was falling into the confused and agitated state common to those who become involved with cults, and I needed help desperately. But in 1979 there was only the bare beginning of a cult-education movement. There was no one my increasingly bewildered and alarmed husband, family, and friends could turn to as I alternated between bouts of withdrawal and hyperemotionalism I couldn't explain. About the only thing that would have changed my mind was to be able to see clearly into the future—in which case I would have cut off my hand rather than pick up that magazine.

I asked Aquino to refer me to other members of the Temple of Set so that I could learn more about their beliefs. In a rather stiff and formal letter, not at all like our previous correspondence, he told me that in order to have access to other "Setians," I would have to join the temple as a provisional member because the group refused to waste time on curious outsiders. (The temple still uses this argument to justify its stance as an exclusive club instead of a religious movement open to the scrutiny of all.) He also warned me that if I became involved with the "black arts" I would suffer social ostracism as well as fear and ridicule from others—but it would be worth it because I would reach a "higher level"

of existence, one that was inconceivable to the lesser humans around me. It was as much a challenge as a warning.

Unaware that Aquino is a professional specialist in the area of psychological warfare, I was deeply impressed with the recruitment brochure he sent to me. He described the temple as "an institution unlike any that you have previously encountered." His writing projected an aura of respectability and intellectualism. For example, Setians did not "worship Satan." Instead, Set was "revered as an intelligent entity who possesses both the perspective and the prerogative to effect changes in the natural Universe in disregard of its intrinsic inertia." The temple embraced a "vast panorama" of occult knowledge, in keeping with its lofty ambitions. Only those possessed of "high intelligence and a very rare sense of magical and philosophical perspective" need apply.

These were "real" satanists, not the stereotypes portrayed in horror movies, the brochure asserted. Only the "paranoid ignoranti from conventional religions" believed that such people would engage in illegal or destructive activities. Aquino's trumpeting of individualism and personal independence—portraying occultists as part of an underground struggle against convention—was intriguing to me, and his repeated assurances that satanists were "ethical" helped to soothe my apprehensions. (I had yet to learn that "individual," "independent," and "ethical" are among the most abused terms in the satanists' lexicon.) There were philosophical and political aspects with which I disagreed and that made me uncomfortable, such as the fact that their view of morality was explicitly subjective. But I brushed aside my concerns, following the pattern of people who join cults and suddenly abandon their own political and social beliefs in order to feel compatible with the group or, as in my case, with a loved person who is involved. Overwhelmed by emotions I could neither understand nor resist, my attempts at questioning were too little, too late.

When I did join the temple I was put in contact with

members from all over the country. I was assigned a "spiritual adviser," a middle-aged woman whose mundane life as a secretary contrasted dramatically with the flamboyant Church of Satan-style rituals she performed in front of an elaborate altar in her high-rise apartment. Once or twice a month I drove down to her place and watched, fascinated, as this satanist priestess, dressed in a black robe with her red hair flowing nearly to her waist, rang bells, waved incense about, and blessed everything in sight with a large phallic-shaped wand, all the while invoking the names of assorted demons. In accordance with the publicly stated rules of the Temple of Set, there were no live sacrifices. Instead, she set fire to an invocation written on a sheet of paper and held it aloft at the end of her *athame*, or ritual sword, calling on Set for aid.

Deep down, part of me knew that I didn't really belong in this strange world. The temple's obsession with the "dark side" of life, to the exclusion of all that was sunlit and joyful, seemed to me unbalanced and oppressive. But I constructed a Setian altar for myself in an unused room at home and wasted countless hours trying to achieve an "initiatory experience" by following the temple's guidelines for its rituals, which were somewhat less colorful than those of my "adviser." I could stare at pentagrams and wait for mystical "gates" to open until the proverbial cows came home, but in truth the only real magical experiences were taking place in my correspondence with Aquino and the world I found in his stories. Still, for his sake, I tried to convince myself that I fit in.

In June 1979, I attended the temple's annual conclave, which was held that year at a Holiday Inn in Windsor, Ontario, across the river from Detroit. I shared a ride with a Setian priest who was in charge of bringing along the accoutrements for the altar. These included a human skull—acquired, I assume, from a medical supply house—and assorted ritual swords and daggers to be waved about during rituals.

(Fortunately for the priest, Canadian customs neglected to check the trunk of his car.).

About thirty members of the group attended the meeting. The hotel lobby swarmed with men in priest's uniforms with black inserts in their clerical collars, and women in tight dresses slit halfway up their thighs. Caught up in my intense feelings for Aquino, which I had by now extended to embrace the rest of the group, I experienced a sense of alienation from ordinary people and bonded with the cultists who surrounded me. I was already buying into the temple's "us versus them" view of the world, which included referring to outsiders as "mere humans."

I was sitting in the hotel coffeeshop with three other temple members when Aquino arrived. I looked up to see a tall man in his midthirties, dressed all in black, who resembled a cross between Bela Lugosi's Dracula and Mr. Spock from *Star Trek*. His most striking features were coal-black hair with a sharp widow's peak and eyebrows that curled up into equally sharp points over hazel eyes. Fair skin and an erect military bearing completed the effect. With him was his girlfriend, a former Church of Satan priestess who had taken the name Lilith. With her long black hair, pale skin, and short, snug black dress slit almost to the hip, she provided an interesting contrast to Aquino's priestly attire. He and I greeted each other exuberantly, more like long-lost friends than the august Ipsissimus of the Temple of Set—Aquino's official title—acknowledging a pretty but lowly recruit.

The temple membership turned out to consist of an odd combination of the respectable and the marginal of society. There were teachers, law enforcement and military officers, nurses, bank tellers, and secretaries, alongside former prostitutes of both sexes and the odd ex-biker or two. There were two former Jesuits. One member turned out to be the principal of a Catholic school! She and her husband, a priest of the cult, had adopted several children.



The Temple of Set is extremely image-conscious, and members had been admonished to avoid behavior that would upset the "humans" and tarnish the group's reputation. But any hopes of discretion were blown when one irrepressible priest found himself in an elevator with several hotel maids. "Who is this Set your group is named after?" one of them asked. He stepped out of the elevator and waited until the doors were beginning to close. "Well," he replied as their astonished faces disappeared, "the ancient Hebrews called him Satan." This news traveled rapidly, and the group was under intense scrutiny by the hotel staff and the local police for the remainder of the weekend.

The highlight of the conclave was a three-hour group ritual held in the hotel ballroom on Saturday evening. The room was dimly lit, and an altar had been set up at one end, surmounted by the temple's inverse-pentagram insignia. The skull I had shared a ride with rested on the altar, surrounded by a semicircle of Setians dressed in an assortment of ritual costumes, color-coded to their level within the temple hierarchy. Ronald K. Barrett, the officiating priest, a vulpine-looking individual with an even more pronounced widow's peak than Aquino's, was dressed in Egyptian fashion, including the elaborately painted eyes familiar from Egyptian artwork.

But the ceremony itself would have been a great disappointment to anyone hoping for naked female altars and bouts of blood drinking, let alone sex orgies or human sacrifices. The temple does not allow outsiders to view its rituals under any circumstances, and they were especially careful to maintain decorum. The result was a long, esoteric rite, the cumulative effect of which was very intense, almost hypnotic. It left many of the members visibly moved.

The next day Aquino and I said goodbye with more smiles and hugs. He had given me his private phone number, and we had several long conversations after the conclave. I had also collected names, addresses, and phone numbers from other temple members, and wrote to several of them. Many

were obsessed with the notion that they were evolving into godlike beings within the elite cocoon of the temple, although few of them seemed to have any clear, specific idea of what this meant. Temple members tended to be of above-average intelligence, but it was not by intelligence alone that the Setians measured their uniqueness; they were convinced that in some mystical, unfathomable way they were "better" than those around them, and they were determined to gain mastery over the "lesser" beings whom they felt were impeding their magical progress. Since most members held down rather mundane jobs and generally lived ordinary lives outside their ritual chambers, there was something pathetic about this collective delusion of grandeur.

Over the next several months, my involvement with Aquino and the temple followed an inexorable course to disaster. My marriage broke up under the strain and I left home and began a round of staying with friends. When Aquino and I became romantically involved during a visit to Washington, he dictated that I was not to interfere with his relationship with Lilith or his position within the temple hierarchy. When my obvious distress caused problems, I was subjected to a great deal of emotional abuse and ultimately expelled from the group. Wishing I were dead, I sought help and eventually found a compassionate therapist. It felt strange to be told for the first time in over a year that my emotional needs were legitimate and I had a right to feel betrayed and devastated after so much loss. A confrontation with Aquino resulted in a brief reconciliation—although I never rejoined the temple—but eventually the disappointments and frustrations wore me down. Furthermore, I had begun to learn some very disturbing things about him. One was his apparent admiration for certain elements of Nazism. Other unsettling information was of a more personal nature. As these revelations increased and the tension between us grew, whatever loving feelings had existed between us disappeared and the relationship was mutually broken off early in 1981.

During the course of our doomed relationship, Aquino had often spoken to me of unspecified "horrors" in his life, once describing his existence as a "barren desert" made bearable only by his black magic pursuits. He rather contemptuously dismissed "human" concerns such as love as unimportant compared to the pursuit of one's "higher self"—a concept whose exact meaning was left unspecified. It appeared to me that he worshipped pain and turmoil as the hallmarks of a superior being, much in the fashion of the Antichrist character Damien from the *Omen* movies, with whom he strongly identified.

Why did I put up with this for nearly two years? Like many cult leaders, Michael Aquino is gifted in the art of convincing those around him that he is noble and misunderstood and that his most outrageous behavior is deserving of understanding and forgiveness. He is highly charismatic and can be intensely charming. Describing himself as an "ethical" person, he is adept at phrasing bizarre and questionable notions in a way that makes them sound reasonable. During the several months I drifted around in a blind haze of love, I abdicated my ability to question his ideas and actions.

Now I had only my devastated life to deal with. I spent four years in treatment for depression. Sometimes, when it felt as if the only alternative was to kill myself, I would pick up the phone and scream abuse at Aquino's answering machine. I didn't care whether it was a "nice" thing to do. I felt I was fighting for my very survival. It took me a long time to begin to live again and to get my mind to function properly. I started to work with the new cult-monitoring organizations that were beginning to form in the early 1980s. The American Family Foundation, a research and educational group closely allied with the Cult Awareness Network, showed me that my experience with Aquino and the Temple of Set reflected that of many others who had become involved in cults. I worked with the AFF for several years and became

assistant editor of their newsletter and that of the Cult Awareness Network.

For a long time I was the "token" ex-satanic-cult member in CAN, but around 1985, when concern over teen involvement in satanism began to rise, I became part of an extensive network that monitors issues related to destructive forms of occult involvement. Through my contacts with police, attorneys, investigators, therapists, journalists, counselors, and cult victims, I came to realize that my experiences with Michael Aquino and the Temple of Set had shown me only the tip of the iceberg. I have seen the deeper, long-term dangers of satanism that are not reflected in the sensational headlines.

The knowledge I have accumulated over the past several years has made me acutely aware that all around us are people leading secret lives that may involve the control and abuse of others. Unless we learn how to identify and avoid such people, we are vulnerable to their predations. I know firsthand how adept they are at manipulating the perceptions of outsiders. While it is true that members of unconventional religions have a constitutional right to their beliefs, it is also true that those they seek to recruit retain the right of self-defense. The free exchange of information is our only weapon, and it is for the purpose of adding to that store of knowledge that this book is written.

## CHAPTER ONE

# Satanism Today

Gone are the days when the furor over satanism swirled around the teenage fans of heavy-metal music, with its demonic imagery and lyrics that had parents, police, politicians, and clergy up in arms. Musical messages of violence and hate are no longer confined to the world of heavy metal, as the controversies over rap-music lyrics bear witness. As the world moves through the last decade of the twentieth century, far more sinister aspects of satanism have pushed "satanic" music right out of the spotlight. In its place stands the monstrous specter of satanic crime.

Law enforcement agencies all over the United States are dealing with hundreds of allegations of satanic ritual abuse of children, often in connection with day care facilities. In November 1992, Frances and Daniel Keller, operators of Fran's Day Care near Austin, Texas, were convicted of aggravated sexual assault on a three-year-old girl and sentenced to forty-eight years in prison. Children who attended the day care told of being molested and forced at gunpoint to perform in pornographic movies. They also remembered being "shot and resurrected," painting pictures with bones dipped in blood, being buried alive with animals, and being taken to a

cemetery to dig up a corpse. Texas Ranger Johnny Waldrip, a member of the investigative team, said he believed that the perpetrators had injected these bizarre ritual elements to discredit the children and enforce silence. Such tactics are effective. In one instance after another, charges of ritual abuse and other crimes linked to satanism and various forms of malevolent occultism have been rejected on grounds no more substantial than that they are "too bizarre to be believed."

That contention does not cut much ice with attorney Cynthia Angell, who was introduced to the dark world of satanic ritual abuse late in 1988. Right from the start, Angell knew that the new custody case she had taken on was an unusual one, even for California. The mother of two small children, a boy and a girl, was trying to cancel visitation with Angell's client, the children's father, charging that he had subjected them to sexual and physical abuse. Not, sadly, that there was anything unusual in that. It was the particular type of abuse the children were alleged to have suffered—sadistic, ritualized, satanic—that set this case apart.

In therapy the kids had described being taken to a "dungeon" and a "jungle" where a man they knew only as King Kong and a woman called Christie, accompanied by two dozen other masked and robed adults, abused them as "punishment" for being "naughty." They were subjected to acts of brutality, sexual perversion, and bestiality. They were forced to witness human sacrifice and to drink human blood to make them "strong." Severely traumatized, the children could provide little that would help to identify King Kong, Christie, or any of the other adults involved.

Although the children's mother had tried to blame their father, Angell soon determined that the abuse had not occurred at the father's home. She also learned that the mother had tried to conceal the fact that the children had attended the Child Development Center at San Francisco's Presidio Army Base. Once considered a model day care facility, in 1987 the Presidio center had been rocked by numerous allegations of

child molestation. In one case, a three-year-old girl had claimed that she'd been taken to the home of U.S. Army Reserve Lieutenant Colonel Michael Aquino and his wife, Lilith, and subjected to bizarre satanic ritual abuse. A specialist in psychological warfare, Aquino was also a former high-level member of Anton Szandor LaVey's Church of Satan and was the founder and high priest of his own satanic religious organization, the Temple of Set.

Angell made formal inquiries about issuing a subpoena to Lieutenant Colonel Aquino to appear as a witness. To her knowledge, the children in her case had not claimed to have been abused by the Aquinos. But Angell thought it might bolster the credibility of their disclosures to have Aquino confirm that there was an ongoing investigation at the Presidio and that he, a practicing satanist, was under scrutiny.

On February 2, 1989, Angell set off to meet a witness at a local restaurant. As she pulled into the parking lot, a man opened the door of her car and stuck a gun in her side. Sliding into the passenger seat, he forced her to drive to a remote area outside of town, where they linked up with a second kidnapper and switched cars. It was then that the purpose of Angell's abduction became clear: The men were to warn her to drop the custody case. First they showed her a photo of a dead, partially skinned infant. Then they blindfolded her and played a tape of adults chanting and children screaming, which they identified as a satanic ritual. Organized satanic crime was real, they assured her. She was messing around with something she didn't understand, and if she didn't back off she wouldn't stay healthy very long.

The terrifying ordeal ended when Angell was released three hours later, back at her car, relieved to be alive. But her abductors' warnings did not have the intended effect. Angell went straight to the police. She was able to provide a detailed description of one of the perpetrators, who had not bothered to hide his face. This enabled the police artist to draw an accurate sketch of a dark-haired, mustached man, which was

then circulated on a Wanted poster offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to arrest and conviction.

The police artist had seen the man's face before. A few months prior to Angell's kidnapping, a woman driving along a local highway had seen something hanging from a roadside sign. At first it looked like a doll, but as she got closer it seemed, to her horror, to be a dead infant. As she slowed to investigate, two armed men pulled up behind her. They told her to move on, that they would take care of the situation. Profoundly disturbed by the sight, she later called local police to find out how the incident had been resolved. They had heard nothing about it. When she came in to make a report, the woman provided the police artist with a description of a muscular Latino male that resulted in a sketch that was remarkably similar to the one of Angell's kidnapper.

Angell went on to pursue her case and win custody for the children's father. Michael Aquino never did appear as a witness. His attorney asserts that he never received Angell's subpoena.

It has never been determined who was responsible for Angell's abduction and the subsequent threats against her life left on her telephone answering machine. "Don't be surprised if somebody finds you hanging someday," one said. She was told by one investigator that some adult ritual-abuse survivors who had retained cult connections had spoken of a plot to kill her. Angell, feeling that she and her case have received more attention than seems warranted, speculates that in some unknown way she has stepped on someone's toes. Possibly someone with a link to satanism.

Angell's ordeal was far from unique. A disturbing hallmark of satanic ritual abuse is the intense harassment and intimidation visited upon the victims, families, attorneys, and therapists involved in these cases. Not infrequently, investigating police and journalists are also subjected to threats. While this activity seldom reaches the level of terrorism experienced by attorney Angell, reports of crank calls, strange cars parked



outside of homes in the middle of the night, dead animals left on doorsteps, and the like are not uncommon. In 1992, several members of the Ritual Abuse Task Force of the Los Angeles County Commission for Women, formed in 1988, voiced concern that they had been subjected to pesticide poisoning. Despite the fact that a lab report confirmed the presence of a toxic substance, the alleged victims of the poisoning were labeled hysterics. The brouhaha raised over this disclosure illustrates one reason why many professionals involved in the investigation of satanic crime prefer to keep silent about the harassment and threats they have received. However, those who have been subjected to such campaigns of intimidation know that the threat is real, and that what they are dealing with is no "witch hunt."

Around the same time as Cynthia Angell was taken on her guided tour of hell, an attorney on the opposite coast—we'll call him Bill Hudson—became involved in the case of a couple whose eight-year-old son had burst into tears one night and told his mother that a school janitor had taken him into a van and molested him. The boy also alleged that he and other children had been taken to neighborhood homes, subjected to electric shock, and forced to watch ritual murders. His abusers had threatened to kill his whole family if he told.

During their first meeting, Hudson's clients told him that they feared their house was being watched and that confidential information they'd given to the police was finding its way into the wrong hands. As Hudson was driving home, his car was struck by a vehicle whose operator was later identified as a drug dealer and a former race-car driver with a reputation as a hit man for a large criminal organization. Over the next several months, a cleverly orchestrated pattern of harassment aimed at Hudson escalated to such a degree that his prestigious law firm hired a round-the-clock bodyguard for him. An electronics expert determined that someone had entered his apartment and ripped out the wiring of his intercom system. Dead animals were left near his car and in front of his building.

These included a squirrel that had been gutted, deboned, and turned inside out, with only its tail protruding from the resulting blob. Veterinarians who examined the remains concluded that the killings and mutilations had been conducted "by someone with professional training."

Hudson and his children were photographed and followed in a flagrant manner obviously intended to intimidate. Unlisted telephone numbers were subjected to crank calls. The message clearly being conveyed was: "We know where you are and we can get to you anytime." Since Hudson was able to determine that several men and women were involved in the harassment, it seems likely that the children's disclosures had disrupted the security and activities of a small but well organized, discreet criminal operation.

Meanwhile, other children in the town went into therapy with a clinical psychologist and began to report abuse. They said they had been forced to watch helplessly as other children were beaten and raped. They spoke of sitting nude in a circle, surrounded by candles and by adults in black robes. They drew pictures of altars. They said they had witnessed scenes of bestiality and animal sacrifice. They told of being forced to drink blood and urine and to eat excrement. They said they had been injected with drugs, and that photographs had been taken of them while they engaged in forced sex. They wept as they told of having to kill infants and of having witnessed the killing of adults. Some told of guns being fired next to their ears, over and over, until they would no longer cry at the sound. One small girl could no longer look at ketchup without becoming sick because it made her think of blood.

Dire consequences would follow if they told, their tormentors assured them. Their parents would die. Their houses would be burned. They themselves would be killed. They feared that the sudden, unexplained death of a fellow student a few years earlier had really been an execution by lethal injection because she had argued with cult members. They

also claimed that local police officers were involved in some of the abuse.

In 1988, several of these children were clinically evaluated at one of the foremost children's medical facilities in the country. The clinicians determined that their findings were consistent with physical, sexual, and satanic ritual abuse. However, despite this evidence and the best efforts of the parents, attorneys, and therapists involved, no charges were filed against the alleged perpetrators. By now the families had enough information to contend that a group of five or six people, including school personnel, had forcibly removed as many as twenty children from the school premises, subjected them to sexual abuse, and filmed them for child pornography. However, state law enforcement authorities did not investigate the children's allegations, and the attorney general closed the case three days before leaving office in 1990.

The alleged perpetrators appeared intent on making sure that the children, the parents, and those attempting to assist them understood that it would be in their best interests to drop the case—and thus, presumably, allow the abuse to continue. Parents' lives were threatened. Children were accosted by men with guns. A doll with an ax in its chest was left on a porch. A parent's car was run off the road. When one child was secretly relocated as the result of threats, Hudson received a message indicating that the perpetrators knew exactly where that child was. Another attorney received a call during which the only sounds were those of a crying child being beaten. Hudson, whose professional experience includes prosecution of organized crime, says that this pattern of harassment seems peculiar to ritual abuse cases.

In 1990 a janitor—who had been named "foster parent of the year" by the state department of social services two years earlier—pleaded guilty to indecent assault and battery on a nine-year-old girl in a neighboring town. Perhaps coincidentally, perhaps not, several years earlier police had confirmed

the presence of a satanic cult in that town. Most of its members were high school students, but two or three adults were also known to be involved. In any event, by early 1993 the janitor was out of jail, and the school department, fully aware of his record, had provided him with a job at the local high school. When irate parents confronted the school committee, the janitor was transferred to a school administration building. Hudson suspects that he is being protected out of fear that he will inform on other perpetrators if he is fired.

Between them, the two cases described above—both involving allegations of child molestation accompanied by elements of satanic ritualism—show many features characteristic of other such cases. The children tell of being forced to participate in satanic ceremonies conducted by adults that include acts of sexual violence, coprophilia, bestiality, and ritual murder. Many investigators now charge that this sexual abuse and exploitation of children is being perpetrated by underground cults of sadistic pedophiles and producers of child pornography linked by a belief system that incorporates a form of satanism. They suspect that the ritualized abuse is often employed as a conditioning tool. Most of these cults are said to be intergenerational, and all are extremely secretive. According to law enforcement officials, in addition to child and adult prostitution and pornography, they are involved in drug and arms trafficking and serious forms of white collar crime such as computer scams and insurance fraud.

One of the main purposes of this vicious form of child abuse appears to be the traumatizing and subsequent control of the minds of the children, cowing them into submission and, ultimately, producing a new generation of abusers and victims. People alleging to be adult survivors of such abuse during childhood have come forward by the hundreds to tell their stories. These disclosures have ignited a controversy over the validity of such memories that has polarized broad segments of the psychiatric, academic, and law enforcement communities. It is true that many of these cases involve seem-

ingly fantastic elements, such as allegations of ritual murders that have gone undetected and unsolved. However, the bulk of the accusations deal with torture, mutilation, child sexual abuse, sadomasochism, animal sacrifice, and cannibalism—ugly, sadistic, and grotesque crimes of sex and violence that, while indeed deserving of the adjective *weird*, have been committed many times over the course of human history. Some of these crimes are known to be an integral part of the worldwide subcultures of sexual sadomasochism and exploitation, including the multibillion-dollar international child prostitution and pornography industry.

When British researcher Catherine Itzin, co-founder of the Campaign Against Pornography and Censorship, visited the Obscene Publications Branch at Scotland Yard she was shown examples of illegal child and adult pornography that had been seized by police. The materials depict acts of violence and degradation including child rape, bestiality, the torture of women, and what appears to be the sexual murder and disembowelment of a female victim. Urination and defecation are featured in several of the photographs. In short, much of what is claimed to occur in the course of ritual abuse has been documented as the stuff of which violent and sadistic pornography is routinely made. In his book *Other Altars*, journalist Craig Lockwood reports having seen several color photos, confiscated by police during the arrest of two women on an unrelated charge, that graphically depict what appears to be some sort of death-and-rebirth rite. A male celebrant is shown lying within the abdominal cavity of a large animal and later engaging in sex with a female corpse. In the face of evidence of such activity, one has to ask: Where does pornography end and satanic ritual begin?

In large part, skepticism is a normal reaction to anything too horrifyingly bizarre to be easily believed, and there is no denying that it has been somewhat offset by the hysterical reactions of uninformed individuals who see a satanic child abuser under every bush. However, the fact that a crime is

"weird" does not exempt us from our obligation to seek justice for the victims. If even a fraction of the allegations of child victims and adult survivors are true, we are looking at a social evil so insidious and so ominous that we have no choice but to work to eradicate it as we would any other form of organized criminal activity.

Instead, skepticism on the subject of satanic ritual abuse—whether it involves allegations by small children or the recovery of repressed memories by adults—has hardened to the point where even the successful prosecution of cases is no defense against attack. In April 1992, Robert Kelly, Jr., owner of the Little Rascals day care center in Edenton, North Carolina, was convicted on ninety-nine of one hundred counts of sexually abusing children at the facility. Kelly received a sentence of twelve consecutive life terms in prison. The prosecutors did not even bring up the subject of the children's allegations of ritual abuse; Kelly was charged with rape, first-degree sexual offense, indecent liberties, and crimes against nature. Nevertheless, in 1993, the public television program *Frontline* broadcast a two-part series on the case, entitled "Innocence Lost," which implied that the conviction of Robert Kelly had been the result of false accusations stemming from mass hysteria over satanic abuse.

In 1990, former Thurston County sheriff's deputy Paul Ingram, of Olympia, Washington, pleaded guilty to having raped his two daughters over a seventeen-year period. The daughters, now adults, claimed that the assaults had occurred during satanic rituals. In May 1993, *The New Yorker* published a two-part article about the case by Lawrence Wright, who essentially accepted the contention of University of California sociologist Richard Ofshe that Ingram's confession had been coerced. In an opinion issued in February 1990, Judge Robert H. Peterson of the Superior Court of the State of Washington had expressed doubts about Ofshe's testimony as a witness, observing that he is neither a clinical psychologist nor an expert on the subject of sexual abuse. Ofshe

nevertheless proclaimed that the accusations against Ingram were part of a crusade by fanatical Christians aimed at "reasserting coherence and authority of fundamentalist perspectives in society." In 1989 he tried to persuade Ingram to withdraw his guilty plea, but when Ingram filed a motion to do so several months later, it was rejected by both the appellate court and the Washington State Supreme Court. The case is now headed for the federal appeals courts.

The oft-repeated claim of skeptics that "no shred of evidence" has been found to support the allegations of ritual abuse in day care centers does not stand up well to scrutiny. This alleged lack of hard evidence is often the result of inadequate investigative efforts. To cite just one outstanding example, during the now-notorious McMartin preschool case, the children accused the operators of the facility of having taken them out of the school through tunnels under the building and schoolyard. cursory exploration of the premises turned up nothing and the tunnels were dismissed as "fantasy." However, as the trial was winding down, the McMartin school was sold, and a group of parents whose children had made allegations of abuse obtained permission to organize a dig under the direction of a professional archaeologist. Several long, hot, dusty days later, their shovels turned up evidence that corroborated the children's reports of a system of tunnels beneath the school. The outraged archaeologist urged that such reports be treated seriously in the future, and observed that had the legal system seen fit to seal off the site and conduct a proper and timely excavation by qualified professionals, this crucial piece of evidence would not have turned up too late to affect the outcome of the trial.

Even the most skeptical reports—such as the "Justice Abused" series run by the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* in January 1988, in which journalists Tom Charlier and Shirley Downing characterized charges of ritual abuse as a "witch hunt"—are forced to recognize the relatively high success rate of convictions in cases known to involve allegations of

ritual sexual abuse. Unfortunately, many prosecutors opt to try such cases in "sanitized" form—that is, in terms of simple sexual or physical assault, omitting all mention of satanic or ritual elements. Consequently, the true rate of conviction in such cases is not reflected in the data available to the public. Nevertheless, Charlier and Downing's own survey found that twenty-three convictions had been obtained out of seventy-nine such cases—a 29 percent success rate. A study of ritual abuse conducted by Dr. Susan Kelley of the Boston College School of Nursing, involving cases in which charges of sexual abuse had been substantiated by child protective agencies, found that criminal charges were filed against the abusers in 92 percent of the cases, and an 80 percent conviction rate was obtained. Clearly, the majority of these cases do not involve frivolous charges based on children's fantasies, but represent serious sexual crimes against children that happen to contain bizarre elements of satanic ritual.

Civia Tamarkin is a Chicago-based award-winning investigative reporter with twenty years' experience who has acquired an expertise in the area of sadistic ritual child abuse. Tamarkin's reputation for accuracy and integrity is well known within her extensive network of contacts. She is convinced that these crimes do occur, but that the emotional reaction to the bizarre satanic phenomena that accompany them has stymied attempts to deal with the problem effectively. Unable to see past the Halloween trappings, investigators and observers alike have failed to recognize the reality of the sadistic sexual abuse that lies at the heart of these cases.

Time and again, Tamarkin has conducted her own investigations into cases of ritual abuse, only to discover that the official investigations have been riddled with crucial errors and that journalistic coverage has been biased and inaccurate. Claims that "no evidence" exists take on a different cast when it is discovered that, in case after case, evidence has been lost in the course of an inept investigation, or that clinical



and forensic records of crucial physical evidence have not been admitted into trial proceedings. Many prosecutors are terrified of taking on cases of sadistic ritual abuse. "I have had so many prosecutors say to me, if you think I'm going to stand before a jury of twelve and talk about these crazy things, then you're crazy," Tamarkin says.

Tamarkin notes that the law enforcement systems in the small towns where many of these cases occur are simply overloaded and break down under the weight of accusations of multiple-perpetrator and -victim ritual child abuse. Inadequately trained investigators conduct seriously flawed operations. In some of these cases, Tamarkin found that search warrants for pornographic materials had been issued weeks and even months into an ongoing investigation. By that time the alleged perpetrators had been tipped off—often by indiscreet investigators—and presumably all such evidence had been destroyed. In several cases, suspects had actually been observed disposing of materials. Witnesses are often not adequately protected, and intimidation occurs when children are allowed visits with relatives who may have been involved in the abuse. In more sinister examples, usually those where the evidence points to individuals with political connections, cases may actually be suppressed. But a botched or covered-up investigation of ritual abuse does not usually find its way into the journalistic annals as a case of justice not being served on behalf of the victims. It is far more likely to be reported as a "witch hunt."

Ritual abuse is only one aspect of the overall problem of satanic crime. Since the early 1980s, a series of brutal, grisly murders, many of them perpetrated by teenagers, have horrified and fascinated the public. In some cases, although the perpetrators were children no more than thirteen or fourteen years of age, their crimes were so vicious and violent that they shocked even hardened police officers. Equally vicious murder sprees by satanism-obsessed adults such as "Night

Stalker" Richard Ramirez, who terrorized Southern California for months before being apprehended in 1985, have shocked the entire nation.

In 1989, small-time marijuana dealer Daniel Rakowitz murdered and dismembered Swiss-born ballerina Monika Beerle in a dispute over the apartment they shared in New York City's East Village. Although the deed was done at 700 East Ninth Street, Ms. Beerle's bones eventually turned up in a duffel bag that had been checked in to the baggage room at the Port Authority bus terminal in midtown Manhattan. Rakowitz had boiled her head in a pot in the apartment's kitchen, where it was discovered by a former roommate who had dropped by to check on the dancer, knowing that Rakowitz had threatened to kill her.

Rakowitz confessed, but was acquitted of murder by reason of insanity and confined to the Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center on Ward's Island. There, he told detectives that he wanted to help them "get to the bottom of this." He claimed to have hung out with a small circle of East Village satanists who indulged in psychedelic drugs and theft. A friend from a satanic church in Brooklyn was present when he killed Beerle, he insisted, and had helped him dismember the body during a candlelit satanic ceremony. Both had cannibalized some of the body parts. Afterward, he said, the rest of her flesh was cut up, boiled, and fed to the homeless squatters in nearby Tompkin's Square Park.

Police at first discounted Rakowitz's claim that a satanic cult operating in the Village was to blame for the murder. By August 1992, however, they had obtained a warrant to search the East Village apartment of Patrick Geffrois, an occultist of Rakowitz's acquaintance. The search netted a ceremonial sword, a pentagram, a plastic skull, and a videotape of a "satanic ritual." Geffrois, put out at the prospect of having to refurbish his altar, proclaimed his innocence and placed the blame on Rakowitz, who he said had<sup>1</sup> asked him to help start a satanic church known as the Temple of the Psychedelic

Light and the Church of the Realized Fantasy. Rakowitz's former roommates recalled how he would ramble on about being the biggest satanist that ever was. Hitler was his hero, his inspiration. He was, the locals recall, "a classic nut" who had been in and out of psychiatric facilities since childhood, a religious crazy who hated blacks, gays, and women, and who was suspected of killing a string of pets.

As the investigation continues, the question that remains to be answered is: Was Rakowitz also a participant in a satanic murder?

Reports connecting satanic practices with criminal activities are widespread and originate in some of the most unlikely places. In May 1990, three members of what police in Florida described as a satanic cult were arrested in a quiet, middle-class section of Coral Springs in connection with a murder-for-hire scheme. Linda Barszcz, the "high priestess" of the cult, and Julian Samaniego, age eighteen, described as her cult "slave," were charged with conspiracy to commit murder. Barszcz's husband, Michael, was charged with possession of marijuana.

Arresting officers discovered an altar, a knife, and colored candles at Barszcz's townhouse, situated across the street from a preschool. One interesting find was a gold chalice and bowl that had been stolen from nearby St. Andrew's Catholic Church. At the time of its reclamation, the bowl was filled with coins, medallions, human teeth, and locks of hair. The small cult was said to hold "bizarre occult rituals" at the house.

The police took pains to make it clear that they were not concerned with the rituals, only with the alleged drug trafficking and the enthusiasm for contract killing expressed by cult members. Acting on a tip, police had sent undercover officer Robert Vernon to infiltrate the group. When Vernon told Barszcz and other members that he was willing to pay twenty thousand dollars to have someone killed, they replied that they "would have no problem killing people or slitting

their throats." Linda Barszcz and Samaniego allegedly offered to fix Vernon up with a hit man if he would supply them with a history and profile of the intended victim. The raid took place on the night before the officer was to have been officially initiated into the cult, a process that was to involve desecrating a holy object or building and celebrating a "night of lust."

Other cult members, along with the Barszczs' friends, family, and lawyer, were quick to deny that the cult was satanic. It was a "mythological" earth religion that worshipped "many gods," they said. Michael Barszcz claimed that his wife, whose bedroom decor included a drawing of a skull with a knife stuck through its eye, made the occult stuff up as part of the swindle. They had no intention of killing anyone, but merely wanted to take the money and run, he insisted. The judge, unimpressed, refused to allow bail for "earth mother" Barszcz. She pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of conspiracy to solicit second-degree murder and was sentenced to a year and a day in a Florida state prison.

In an article for the *St. Petersburg Times*, Stephen Koff made some interesting observations about this and similar cases. Americans, he said, especially those who are highly mobile, don't have a clue whether their neighbors are terrorists, cultists, or regular people. Most of us are concerned primarily with our own privacy and security and have neither the time nor the inclination to snoop into our neighbors' lives. Koff's point is well taken. Most of us have no idea what is out there. While the inept antics of the Barszcz gang are perhaps representative of the majority of criminals who attempt to use the occult as an adjunct to their other activities, law enforcement officials are increasingly aware that there exists a far more secretive and deadly brand of satanic criminal.

"Bill Carmody" is the pseudonym of a senior intelligence instructor at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center,

who must conceal his identity for security reasons. Several years ago Carmody was following up a report of missing children that was rumored to be cult-related. As a member of a special investigative team, he conducted a probe into a satanic cult network that operated in several states in the Southwest. Over the course of several years, Carmody infiltrated a total of three criminal satanic cults—and barely escaped with his life.

When Carmody discussed his plans to penetrate one of these groups with an informant from the occult subculture, he was warned that he could wind up "very, very dead" despite his experience in investigating organized crime. An ordinary mobster retains the capacity to love someone, or something, the informant told Carmody, even if it is only his dog. But these satanic cult people don't have normal emotions. They love nothing and no one.

It is hard to comprehend the evil and the terror involved in the activities of such cultists and in their methods of intimidation, Carmody says. "The ones that are most serious are often very much underground, and those covens have the strongest organizations and have the most communications skills, and have the networking," here and abroad. They engage in the sale of narcotics, weapons, kidnapped children, and child pornography, as well as in burglary, insurance and computer fraud, and arson for hire. "The secretiveness of this—I almost have to laugh when it's compared sometimes with organized crime as we know it," Carmody says. "Organized crime is on billboards for all to see in comparison to very serious satanic cult covens, and that secret has been kept for some time." The cultists hope to keep it forever.

According to Carmody, the more sophisticated criminal cults are led by intelligent, well-educated, middle- to upper-class professionals who often have respectable jobs and important positions in their communities. The cultic groups to which they belong constitute a highly secretive subculture

within the wider criminal underground. They are usually comprised of intergenerational family members, and the blood ties help to maintain the secrecy.

When they are arrested, they rarely identify themselves as cultists. In fact, their cult membership is kept secret even from fellow criminals outside the cultic unit. "Very serious satanists have been arrested in the past, satanists that were in covens that were involved in serious criminal activity," Carmody says. "But the association between that criminal activity and their involvement, participation, and membership in a coven is rarely, rarely identified, and that is by design. They are much more fearful of the Master than they are of the prosecutor."

The suggestion that successful, seemingly respectable people could be involved in satanic organizations, sex cults, or occult-related criminal activity is difficult for many of us to accept. But consider the implications of an intriguing tidbit of information that turned up in the August 23, 1987, issue of the *Newark Sunday Star-Ledger* in a story about private corporate detectives. The board of directors of a local corporation had become concerned over a senior executive who had been "'drawing large cash advances, taking unexplained business trips to Europe, and using the company's credit card at an obscure bookstore." They had called in a private investigative agency called Unitel, which quickly discovered that the bookstore sold pornography, sadomasochistic implements, and books on the occult. They also discovered that the executive in question was leading a bizarre double life: He had been using company funds to finance his ritual activities as high priest of a satanic cult. Nor was he the only one. Unitel representative William Callahan said that the firm had discovered four or five other executives—men in their sixties and seventies—involved in such cults. "Nothing surprises us anymore," he commented.

Yet, while many law enforcement officials are educating

themselves about the realities of satanism and occult-related crime and ritual abuse, others remain adamant in their skepticism. One of the most vociferous is FBI agent Kenneth Lanning, a specialist in child sexual abuse with the Behavioral Science Unit at the Bureau's Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Lanning points out that more crime and child abuse have been committed by followers of mainstream religions than by satanists, an irrelevant observation given the fact that there are far more of the former than of the latter. While Lanning is willing to admit, grudgingly, that "a few clever, cunning people" might be getting away with this sort of thing, he still insists that no one could commit these crimes on the scale indicated by the current volume of complaints.

Lanning's prestige as an FBI agent has perhaps lent undeserved credibility to his opinions among those who do not realize that he is an analyst and does not actually conduct working investigations of such cases. In her June 1993 article in *Vanity Fair* magazine, Leslie Bennetts reports that when she asked Lanning whether he could honestly say he believed that none of the "hundreds and hundreds" of ritual abuse survivors on whose cases he had consulted over the past ten years, he admitted that he had never actually interviewed a ritual abuse survivor. He had talked to other law enforcement professionals but had not consulted the women who had made the reports. Bennetts later amended this to state that he told her he had talked with "several dozen" survivors on an "unofficial" basis.

Concurrent with the reports of criminal activity has been the rise of legally operating satanic sects such as the Temple of Set and the Werewolf Order, most of them offshoots of the Church of Satan founded by Anton LaVey in 1966. These religious organizations are protected under the First Amendment, and, while most preach the elimination of all restraints and openly exhibit an unhealthy fascination with Nazism, they loudly protest that they are innocent of any involvement

in satanic crimes. They are quick to cry persecution whenever the suggestion is made of a link between their philosophies and the actions of less "ethical" satanists.

Despite the militant skepticism often directed at charges of satanism-related crime, there are many segments of our society in which disclosures of such activity come as no surprise to anyone. The violent and perverse occult subculture of Southern California that nurtured the notorious Manson family has yet to be exhaustively dissected in print. But it is known that a surprising number of "big name" entertainment stars have had brushes with satanism. In his autobiography, *Why Me?*, the late Sammy Davis, Jr., writes candidly about his experience. Shortly after his divorce from actress May Britt he accepted an invitation to attend a party with some actors who were into satanism. "Evil fascinated me," he recalled. The party turned out to be an orgy highlighted by the simulated sacrifice of a virgin. Davis discovered to his surprise that the hooded man acting as a leader of the "'coven" was his barber, Jay Sebring. In 1969, Sebring would die with Sharon Tate at the hands of the Manson family. Sebring, as Davis put it, had always been "a little weird." He had constructed a dungeon in his basement and had tried unsuccessfully to entice Davis over to view the "real antique pieces" he had collected.

Shortly after the party, Davis met Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey, who warned him not to get involved in satanism unless he was serious about the commitment. But Davis, who wanted to "have every human experience," joined up anyway, openly flaunting one symbolic red fingernail and wearing a Church of Satan Baphomet pendant on stage in Las Vegas. It was sheer bravado, and, as Davis put it, "the chicks loved it." But Sammy Davis, Jr., was fortunate enough to have an inner thermostat that warned him when things were getting too hot. "One morning after a 'coven' that wasn't quite fun and games," he recalled, "I got some nail polish remover and I took off the red fingernail."



Like Davis, we who have encountered contemporary satanism over the past several years seldom knew what we were in for. Few of us entered this field of inquiry as a calculated career decision. More often than not, we stumbled upon it in the dark. Most of the people wrestling with this problem are not fundamentalist Christian evangelists looking for devils to cast out. They are police officers and therapists, journalists and attorneys, parents and teachers, counselors and clergy whose lives have become entwined with those of the victims of satanist recruitment and occult-related crime.

I have come to take very seriously the dangers posed to our society by satanism and malevolent occultism. In my opinion, much of the skepticism about satanism is based on naive misconceptions, foremost of which is the notion that there exists a benign version of the satanist religion represented by organizations such as the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set. However, as we shall see, these groups are increasingly dominated by a philosophy hospitable to racists, neo-Nazis, and Holocaust deniers. Promoting an ideology that seeks to destroy the boundaries between moral concepts of good and evil, they work toward the establishment of a society in which all things are permitted. While these groups themselves may not engage in organized criminal activity, persons associated with them have been charged with a variety of crimes, ranging from malicious mischief to felonies.

I define satanism as a belief system that is grounded in reverence for or worship of Satan or his equivalent—such as the ancient Egyptian god Set—whether this figure is conceived of as real or as mythological. It is not accurate to define satanism exclusively as the system of beliefs promulgated by the Church of Satan or the Temple of Set, any more than it would be proper to define Christianity as the teachings of any particular Christian church or denomination. Like followers of other broad religious categories, satanists expound a variety of specific points of religious ideology, although, as we shall see, they do hold certain general beliefs in common.

Satanism is protected under the First Amendment, as are other forms of religious belief; that protection does not, however, exempt it from thoughtful criticism.

Recently, some people working on the problem of ritual abuse and other forms of occult-related crime have tended to shy away from the term *satanic* because of its "weird" connotations. However, according to the dictionary, the adjective *satanic* simply means malicious, wicked, and devilish. Throughout the book I will be using it in that sense, since the word effectively conveys the aura of calculated, malevolent occultism that surrounds so many of the destructive and criminal behaviors described.

Satanic crime—in fact, all violent, destructive, and criminal activity associated with malevolent forms of occultism—exists as part of a wider criminal continuum and must be understood and recognized within that context. Satanic ritual child abuse is a subcategory of the international scandal represented by the sexual enslavement and exploitation of millions of women and children. The criminal activities of satanic cults cannot be fully understood outside of the wider context of worldwide drug and arms trafficking, prostitution, pornography, and other organized criminal activities. Indeed, it is only when we learn to integrate the "unbelievable" accounts of ritual abuse with the images of gang violence, political torture, concentration camps, terrorism, warfare, and other forms of cruelty and mayhem that fill the news broadcasts every night that we may begin to confront our own skepticism and put into proper perspective our reluctance to deal with the problem of modern satanism. Perhaps then we will begin to take effective steps to combat this ancient and persistent form of evil.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Historical Background

*Satanism* is the term commonly used to refer to the worship of the supreme personification of evil in the Western Judaeo-Christian religious tradition. Christianity teaches that the Supreme God is all good, and that an angel named Satan, or Lucifer, who defied God, was cast out of Heaven and exists as God's adversary, ruler of Hell, and cause of all evil in the world. In our culture, this definition of the Devil, which has been both reinforced and modified over the centuries, is the one most generally accepted. Contemporary satanism, however, is based not so much on the explicit worship of evil but on the contention that "good" and "evil" do not exist in any objective sense. Modern satanists proclaim that their goal is to rise above these mundane human designations into a godlike position of total, unrestricted freedom and power that places them "beyond good and evil."

People turn to satanism and black magic for many complex reasons, but the one common denominator is power. True satanists, as that term is meant in the context of Western religion, have chosen to oppose the Judeo-Christian God and work for the victory of Satan. They seek to share in his power, which they believe to be greater than God's. A common

rationale for Satan-worship is the belief that while the earth may be God's creation, Satan has been designated "Lord of this world" in a gross material sense. Consequently, most satanists look to their Master to make their dreams come true. The classic example of this is the man who "sells his soul to the devil" in exchange for power, riches, sexual conquests, and whatever else he desires.

But devotion to satanism is rarely based on such simple motives. Many satanists formulate complex rationalizations, rooted in centuries-old occult beliefs and philosophies, in their search for the license to indulge in whatever behaviors they feel express their "true will," regardless of whether that exercise of will interferes with the rights of others. In order to act out these behaviors, they must rid themselves of any concept of human rights and strive to attain a cosmic perspective that will allow them godlike control of the lesser beings of the ordinary, or "profane," world. One of the tools they employ to this end is to focus on and invoke the demonic beings they feel personify this goal. Chief among these in the Western tradition is Satan himself.

After Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, the ancient religious traditions—including fertility rites, magical practices, and some forms of blood sacrifice—continued to be practiced by the cultures that came under the control of Rome. But to the early Christians, the pagan gods were demons. The Church harassed pagan holdouts who still worshiped the old gods, but during its first centuries of power the punishment for such "backsliding" was apt to involve doing penance. It was those who were accused of practicing the ancient arts of witchcraft or sorcery who faced stiff fines or even execution. Over the centuries, persecution increased and gradually drove the old religions underground as Europe was overrun by barbarians and the Dark Ages closed in fast upon the fading light of the classical world.

While sorcery and witchcraft have been feared throughout man's history, the concept of "satanists"—organized oppo-

nents of Christianity believed to be operating in the name of Satan—were not perceived as a serious threat to the Church's authority until the Middle Ages, when heretical sects flourished all over Europe. Most were rooted in a belief system known as *gnosticism*, which developed in the early centuries of the Christian era. *Gnosis* means "knowledge"—not rational understanding, but a unique, mystical, esoteric insight that must be acquired through intuition. To gnostics, gnosis is superior to faith and religious dogma as well. Dualism is the gnostic belief that there are two separate contending cosmic principles—Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, Order and Chaos—battling it out for control of the universe. Most dualist gnostics believe that good will be the eventual victor, but some condemn this world as an evil realm of corruption that man can escape only through gnosis of a higher reality.

Some gnostic sects believed that all matter had been created not by God, who was a spiritual being of infinite goodness, but by a demonic, lesser deity called the *demiurge*, often identified with Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews and the Christians. Since they viewed all matter as evil, including the human body, gnostics denied that Christ had been incarnated in human form to undergo death and resurrection. As might be expected, this put them on a collision course with the Church, which initiated a crusade to crush the gnostic sects. The remnants that survived influenced later sects, which taught that there are two equally powerful creative agents at work in the world, one good and the other evil.

To these gnostics, matter was the evil creation of Satan. The ascetic gnostics mortified the flesh. They forbade the eating of meat, condemned manual labor, and even opposed marriage and procreation. By contrast, the libertine gnostics believed one had to experience everything in Satan's world in order to be free of it and to obtain salvation for the divine spark within. They also opposed the Church and its symbols, proclaiming that the cross on which Christ was crucified had been made by Satan and was therefore detested by God. On

a sociopolitical level, they got themselves into trouble with the authorities by ridiculing the rich and powerful.

As these beliefs spread throughout Europe they influenced more powerful sects, such as the Cathars, a flourishing religious movement in southern France in the twelfth century, which taught that the God of the Old Testament was actually Satan, rival of the ultimate God and creator of the material world. Much of the Cathars' popularity was based on their reputation for honesty and good deeds, and they attracted many followers who felt oppressed by the Church and feudal society. Although the Cathar initiates called *Perfects* were ascetics, lower-level Cathars were permitted to live relatively normal lives. Those who were unwilling to practice abstinence were allegedly encouraged to engage in unorthodox sexual activities that would not result in conception, and they gained a reputation for sexual perversion. Some gnostics believed that their special "knowledge" made them gods who could not be corrupted by anything they did.

The Cathars repudiated the Catholic Mass because they believed that the sacraments were the creation of Satan. What became the infamous satanic black mass may owe part of its origins to the secret practices of Cathar priests and other heretics who tampered with the Mass in order to reverse its meaning and insult the God it was meant to worship. Whether any of these sects actually worshiped Satan is unknown, but the combined religious and political threat they represented gave rise to the Inquisition, instituted in 1233 by Pope Gregory IX to suppress heretics. When the Inquisition dealt with witchcraft, it treated it primarily as a challenge to Church authority. The later Protestant witchcraft persecutions were more concerned with alleged pacts with the Devil and the malevolent use of occult powers.

Modern neopagans contend that much of the turmoil over satanism grew out of the persecution of their forerunners, the holdouts who continued to practice the ancient pagan fertility religion. This claim has been disputed by scholars, but while

it is doubtful that much in the way of organized preservation of the old pagan faith survived into the Middle Ages, it is certain that many pagan myths, beliefs, customs, and superstitions lived on in folk traditions that were opposed by the Church. Some scholars believe that by the fourteenth century, certain gnostic beliefs and practices had combined with remnants of pagan rites to form the "witches' sabbat," a major outdoor ceremony honoring a Satan-like figure known as the "god of the serfs." While bearing only limited resemblance to what would now be called a black mass, the sabbat was said to include elements such as sacrifice of animals, use of hallucinogenic herbs, blasphemous parodies of the Catholic Mass, and wild dancing and sex orgies that later turned up in various versions of the classic satanic rite. Whether cannibalism and child sacrifice actually occurred at the sabbats, the lurid descriptions provided by accused witches appear to have inspired "copycat" rituals by satanists in more recent centuries.

While the term *witch* in centuries past was usually associated with the Devil, *witch* was not a synonym for *satanist*. There were satanist witches who worshipped Satan and believed they shared in his power, nonsatanist "black witches" whose focus was on the employment of malicious magic, and witches who claimed to use "white" magic only for purposes of healing. But for centuries, the term *witch* has been used rather loosely to describe anyone who believes he or she possesses occult powers. The Church has tended to condemn all such powers as demonic usurpations of the power of God, but it is specifically because people believe that magic can be used to do harm as well as good that witches have been feared since ancient times. The Greeks and Romans believed that witches could use magic to blight crops, cause bad weather, kill animals and people, and influence sexual activity. While today's law does not consider such alleged powers to have any basis in fact, in the Middle Ages, and even in later centuries, sorcery and witchcraft were believed to be effective

and were illegal. Therefore, in a technical sense at least, the witchcraft persecutions involved "criminal" behavior as well as heresy. In some cases, the behaviors that were uncovered were clearly criminal and needed no theological justification for their prosecution.

One such case was that of Baron Gilles de Rais, one of the wealthiest nobles in fifteenth-century Europe. At age fifteen he entered the service of the king of France, Charles VII, where his skill and courage so impressed his superiors that they entrusted the future Joan of Arc to his protection. After she was burned at the stake by the English, Gilles returned to his estates, where he ruled in spectacular fashion as a feared and envied despot. He was also a sadistic pedophile and was fascinated by the occult. Since his youth, Gilles's literary preferences had tended toward stories of the depraved sexual activities of the Roman Caesars. Now, voluptuously ensconced in his estates and surrounded by male cronies and hangers-on, Gilles developed an obsession with the alchemical quest for the "philosopher's stone" that could turn lead into gold. To this end, he spent a fortune auditioning alchemists.

Gilles's prolonged acquaintance with a parade of learned occultists educated him in the true aim of alchemy—the transformation of the magician from the base metal of humanity into godhood itself. But the unscrupulous sorcerers Gilles consulted convinced him that in order to gain absolute power, he must teach himself to glory in brutality and death. It was at this point that he came under the influence of Francisco Prelati, a Florentine priest and magician who claimed to be adept at raising demons if the right sacrifices were made, namely offerings of the flesh and blood of young children. In collaboration with Prelati, Gilles embarked on a quest for the godlike power of uninhibited evil.

For some time, ugly rumors had been circulating that children were disappearing into Gilles's chateau, never to be seen again. Parents in the area had taken their complaints to the



bishop, but since Gilles was absolute lord on his estates, little could be done. Then Gilles made his fatal error: He imprisoned a priest, and the bishop had him arrested for it. A search of his estate turned up physical evidence, including the dismembered corpse of a child. He was brought before an ecclesiastical court on charges of sorcery, sodomy, and murder.

Gilles confessed to the sadistic murders of eight children; their suffering, he said, had given him ecstatic pleasure. But when he begged forgiveness, the bishop embraced him and prayed for his redemption. The ecclesiastical court excommunicated him for heresy, and the civil court, to which he was turned over next, condemned him to be hanged and burned. He was executed in October 1440, along with two of his associates.

When Gilles was tried and executed, the disastrous persecution that would come to be known as the *witch mania* was decades away. The Inquisition was concerned mainly with questions of heresy, and dealt with cases of witchcraft and sorcery to a lesser degree. But ironically, the Renaissance, which resulted from the rebirth of interest in science and the power of reason, also witnessed an increased fascination with magic and alchemy. This added fuel to the persecutions for witchcraft and sorcery, as did the Reformation, when both the Catholic and Protestant sides claimed to be under siege by Satan and his minions.

The Inquisition and witch mania took place during a time of widespread and deep-rooted belief in magic, demons and spirits, supernatural powers, and above all the dangers posed by Satan. This was not merely superstition but was based on a concept of the nature of the universe that was radically different from our own. It is important to remember that over the course of the centuries during which the witch hunts took place, Western civilization progressed from the belief that the earth sat at the center of a universe made up of concentric crystal spheres guided by angels to the slow discovery of

the true construction of the solar system. So, while many farsighted people did decry the ignorant beliefs that fueled the persecutions, many others, equally intelligent, defended the trials and executions. Both their theological concepts and their understanding of the nature of reality allowed for the possibility of supernatural feats of malice. Due to widespread ignorance and misunderstanding, it was common for people to believe that they and others had supernatural powers. Virtually everyone believed that "witches" had such powers and that hordes of demons were roaming about looking for a chance to possess the unwary. To this we owe some of the confessions—both voluntary and those obtained under torture—of people who really did believe themselves to be witches.

Both Catholics and Protestants believed in a satanic conspiracy to defeat true Christianity. During the earlier centuries, the Catholic Church had tried to discourage belief in witchcraft as a deception of Satan. But by the time the witch mania ended, the pendulum had swung to the other side, and it was those who refused to believe in the existence of witchcraft who were viewed with suspicion.

Whatever truths may have been included in the accusations of witchcraft, here indeed was an example of the cure being worse than the disease. The massive tragedy of the witch hunts obscured the fact that, in many cases, real criminal activity was uncovered amid the persecutions. *Witch hunt* has become a synonym for a spurious investigation based on mass hysteria. At a distance of three centuries, the legacy of the witch hunt terror still poisons the debate over satanic crime and ritual abuse.

But as the witch mania began to collapse at the end of the seventeenth century under the weight of public enlightenment, more cases involving true criminal activity began to come to light. The most spectacular of these occurred in France during the reign of King Louis XIV and is known as the Affair of the Poisons. This case was explicitly conducted

as a criminal prosecution, not a witchcraft persecution, and featured many striking parallels with today's accounts of ritual abuse, sacrifice, and generational satanism linked to other forms of crime such as drug trafficking and child pornography.

In seventeenth-century Europe, poison was the perfect murder weapon. Virtually undetectable by the primitive methods of the time, a lethal substance was free to do its work relatively unhampered by the few and unreliable antidotes that might be administered to the victim. Poison was the weapon of choice of the unscrupulous sorcerers who infested the criminal underworld, but its devotees could also be found at the top of the social ladder.

By 1678 a series of suspicious deaths had shaken the upper levels of French society. The priests of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris were sufficiently alarmed to inform the authorities that poisoning now led the list of sins they were hearing in the confessional. Police raids on suspected poison operations turned up a motley collection of miscreants, including chemists and alchemists, astrologers, palm-readers, fortune-tellers, sorcerers, necromancers, and satanists. Among them were a number of corrupt priests.

One night a Paris attorney attended a party at which a drunken reveler named Marie Bosse boasted that she could retire a rich woman after she supplied a few more well-heeled clients with poison. He reported the incident to a friend in the police department, who sent a female decoy to pose as a client. When she obtained a vial of poison on her second visit, the police raided Bosse's house. There they found dozens of vats and vials containing arsenic, mercury, nitric acid, hemlock, belladonna, digitalis, mandrake root, and other deadly poisons. The stuff of death spells was there too: Besides the usual powdered toad, bat, and snake, there were nail clippings, bone splinters, jugs of human blood, excrement, urine, and semen, plus slabs of hanged-man's fat. The police arrested the whole family—Bosse and her daughter and

two sons, found sleeping together in a big bed. (Subsequent testimony revealed a tradition of incest among these multigenerational practitioners of the black arts.)

One of the next to be picked up was a jeweler's wife by the name of Catherine Deshayes Monvoisin, popularly known as La Voisin. She had turned her house into a magnet for the high society of Paris by practicing fortune-telling, selling beauty preparations, and engaging in celebration of the Catholic Mass to further the ends of black magic. Initiated into the occult arts at age nine by her mother, she was adept at concocting aphrodisiacs and abortifacients. She and her many fortune-telling cohorts gained a death grip on their clients' superstitions, impressing them by "conjuring up the Devil," providing them with curses and love potions, and playing on their ambitions by providing contracts for them to sell their souls in exchange for royal favor.

As La Voisin's fame spread among the wealthy and her profits increased, she bought an expensive house in a Paris suburb and there she held court in a richly embroidered "emperor's robe." On the grounds she built a private chapel, its black-draped walls surrounding an altar with a mattress concealed beneath its covering. She chose lovers from the nobility and the underworld alike. She had a whole stable of renegade priests at her beck and call, including the vicar of her own church, who provided her with stolen Hosts for her rituals. And she sold poison. When the police searched the grounds of her house they discovered the burnt remains of human infants, as well as vats of poisonous substances, magical books, robes, black candles, and, most important of all, La Voisin's "little black book" of prominent clients.

La Voisin herself appears genuinely to have believed that she possessed the powers of a sorceress. Nothing was impossible for her, she told her clients. Only another god could understand such powers as hers. She had friends in high places who protected her from prosecution, even when questions were asked about the mysterious characters coming and

going from her house and the odd-smelling smoke billowing into the midnight air. The Catholic Church might seek to "persecute" her, but she had discussed her "art" with doctors and professors. Had not royalty sought her out? Her friends in high places proved to be no protection, however, and she was burned at the stake in February 1680.

Ironically, the suspects in this case could not be tried for black magic because in 1672 King Louis XIV had abolished the laws against witchcraft. Eventually, the king had to create a special statute in order to prosecute the renegade priests for sacrilege. The case also differed from the witchcraft persecutions in that torture was confined to the final stages of the judicial process, and most of the testimony was acquired by regular methods of interrogation. This and the significant amount of physical evidence that was uncovered contribute significantly to the investigation's credibility.

The king had appointed a special commission called the Chamber of the Arsenal—popularly known as La Chambre Ardente, or the Burning Court—to oversee the proceedings. Nicholas Gabriel de La Reynie, the lieutenant-general of Police of Paris, headed the investigation. An innovative official with an excellent reputation, La Reynie was relatively uninterested in the occultist antics of the accused and instead focused his efforts on the criminal activities, primarily the trafficking in poisons. Nevertheless, his investigation was hampered by public skepticism and denial, as well as by pressure from above.

The king's mistress, the Marquise de Montespan, had been involved in La Voisin's illegal activities. In 1667 she had been one of the queen's ladies, already scheming to become the new royal mistress. No woman of Montespan's overarching ambition would be content to rely on potions and love spells. She wanted a ritual that would harness the magical potency of the Catholic Mass. A sorcerer named Le Sage, assisted by a renegade priest named Mariette, obliged her with a Mass in which a love potion, intended to be slipped

into the king's food, was placed under the chalice as an invocation was made to win the king's love. Two pigeons, solemnly consecrated to the names of King Louis XIV and Montespan, were sacrificed, their hearts cut out and their blood mingled. The magical rite seemed to achieve its end, and the king took Montespan as his new mistress.

Because of this "success," she became addicted to the power of magic as surely as if it were a drug. As the years went by and she bore a series of children to the king, Montespan's body expanded and her fear of losing Louis increased. Like any addict, it took increasingly more powerful doses of her drug to satisfy her. Montespan turned to La Voisin, who introduced to her another of her stable of renegade priests, the Abbe Guibourg, a repulsive old man with a bloated face and a squint who performed black masses draped in religious vestments embroidered with black pine cones, an ancient symbol of fertility.

La Voisin's stepdaughter Marguerite testified that she had helped set up an altar with a mattress on which Montespan lay naked, her legs dangling over the edge. A linen napkin covered her belly; a cross was set on it, and the chalice placed on her groin. A premature infant was brought in and placed in a basin. Guibourg, standing between Montespan's legs, slit its throat and drained the blood into the chalice. Flour was added and a wafer was made and consecrated. The incantation, familiar from the earlier accounts of Le Sage and Mariette, was read: "Hail, Ashtaroth and Asmodeus, Princes of Affection, I conjure you to accept the sacrifice of this child for the favors I ask: that I should keep the love of the king . . . that the queen should become barren . . . that the king should leave her bed and board and come to mine . . . that he should grant whatever I ask of him . . . that the queen should be repudiated . . . that I should marry the king." Invoking Ashtaroth and Asmodeus was a case of demonic double-teaming. Ashtaroth, also called Astarte, represented the ancient mother-goddess as half of a dualistic male-female

version of Satan popular during that period. Ashtaroth granted love, and Asmodeus, the male half of the team and the representative of the forces of darkness, was in charge of dispatching the rival.

The body of the sacrificed infant was burned in the garden furnace, but its heart and entrails, also consecrated by Guibourg, were taken by La Voisin to be distilled with the blood and a consecrated Host into a potion that was given to Montespan in a glass vial, to be added to the king's food. The investigation disclosed that besides premature or aborted fetuses and unwanted infants, children who had been sold or stolen were also used in these rites. (In 1676, Paris police had put down an outbreak of attacks on midwives and abortionists by "hysterical" women screaming about kidnappings and sacrifices.) Guibourg was said to have once sacrificed his own illegitimate child.

Tradition required that the Mass be said three times, but, according to Marguerite, Montespan had had enough. Begging off with the excuse that she "didn't have the time," she insisted that La Voisin act as her stand-in for the next two rites. It seems reasonable to believe that this piece of testimony was true and that Montespan, never having been exposed to child sacrifice before, was shaken by the experience and wanted nothing more to do with it—at least not directly.

La Reynie was convinced that Montespan was guilty, but when the evidence was laid before Louis he suspended the inquiry rather than publicly acknowledge that his mistress was accused of such crimes. In her status and influence, Montespan was the *de facto* queen of France, and such a scandal would have made Louis and his government the laughingstock of Europe. La Reynie was beside himself. Trying to maintain an open mind, checking and counterchecking, comparing statements and balancing contradictions against corroborations, he had brought all the logic he possessed to bear on building this case. He had filled his notebooks with meticulous analyses of testimony and evidence. And he knew

that the evidence against Montespan must be presented, or the other criminals—including Guibourg—would escape full justice. Case-hardened cop he might be, but still he was appalled at the viciousness of the crimes he had uncovered and outraged that their very enormity rendered them "unbelievable" and thus provided a safeguard for their perpetrators. His anguished cry of protest, "We are dealing here with flesh and blood—with living men!" echoes down the centuries to his modern-day counterparts.

In May 1681, Louis decreed that the transcripts from the trial pertaining to this sensitive evidence would become the basis of a separate and secret investigation to be conducted by La Reynie. The king was under pressure from his advisers to shut down the investigation entirely, but that he refused to do. The court ordered the execution of several more of the prisoners left under its jurisdiction, but by early 1682 even La Reynie agreed it was time to close the case. It had been the most extensive legal process of Louis's reign. Between April 1679 and April 1682, 218 persons had been arrested, 104 judgments had been rendered, 34 death sentences had been carried out, and 30 persons had been acquitted. The Chamber of the Arsenal was officially dissolved on July 21, 1682. La Reynie released 40 minor defendants, who returned to the Paris underworld. Most of the rest were fined, banished, deported, sent to convents or charity hospitals, or imprisoned. The 14 prime offenders—Guibourg among them—were sent to the darkest dungeons of the kingdom, there to be chained to the walls of their isolated cells for the rest of their lives. The last of them died in 1724.

Those members of Paris society who had been accused were acquitted. All had admitted to having been clients of La Voisin. None would admit to having bought poisons. Louis continued to treat the Marquise de Montespan with courtesy, but they would never again be left alone together and eventually she retired from court life. The true extent of her involve-



ment, and whether she actually engaged in criminal activities, will probably never be known.

While the prosecution of the La Voisin case drove many criminally inclined satanists further underground, its "chilling effect" was limited. During the tolerant decades of the Enlightenment there was an upsurge in various forms of satanism, especially in debauchery-prone pseudosatanic organizations like Sir Francis Dashwood's Medmenham Hellfire Club, whose membership included some of the most influential political and literary figures in eighteenth-century England. The club consisted mostly of wealthy young "bucks" or "rakes" whose lives revolved around gambling, drinking, whoring, blaspheming, and violence. The Irish version, the Hell-Fire Club of Dublin, was organized by a group of vicious young aristocrats—including a descendant of Oliver Cromwell—whose regular rituals included setting fire to a cat after toasting the Devil in a Dublin tavern.

But it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the activities of satanists who allegedly practiced the "black arts" of sorcery and offered blood sacrifices again came to light. One particularly sensational case in France involved a defrocked Catholic priest known as the Abbe Boullan and his mistress, a former nun named Adele Chevalier. Their "church" featured sex rituals, bestiality, and the ingestion of human feces during "exorcisms" performed as black masses—all in the name of spiritual advancement. During one of these rites, Boullan and Chevalier allegedly sacrificed their own illegitimate son.

The emphasis on orgiastic sacrilege and violence in underground satanic rituals figures in the accounts of black masses by nineteenth- and twentieth-century authors such as J. K. Huysmans, William Seabrook, and Dennis Wheatley. Huysmans's fascinating novel, *La-Bas* ("Down There"), gives a vivid picture of the underground satanist scene in nineteenth-century France. The plot centers on the obscene and orgiastic

black masses perpetrated by "Canon Docre," a corrupt priest in the Guibourg tradition who is obsessed with sacrilege and adept at hypnotism. (His followers have a suspicious tendency to expire mysteriously shortly after having revised their wills in his favor.) Huysmans's descriptions of this satanic subculture bear many similarities to today's reports of ritual abuse. "Surely nobody is cutting children's throats as in the days of . . . abbe Guibourg," one character protests. "You mean that nobody is brought to justice for doing it," another cynically retorts.

The most infamous black magician of the twentieth century was Aleister Crowley, whose motto, "Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be the Whole of the Law," has become a catchphrase of many branches of modern occultism, including satanism. Crowley was\* born in England in 1875, the son of devout members of the Plymouth Brethren, a puritanical Christian sect. Some observers have rather superficially interpreted his attraction to the diabolical as a rebellion against the religion of his childhood. This rebellion was so complete that his mother took to calling him "the Beast 666" after the book of Revelation, an epithet Crowley defiantly adopted along with a string of other "magical" aliases. While many young men have rebelled against a strict fundamentalist upbringing, no one else did it quite like Aleister Crowley.

Crowley's obsession with occultism was focused on sex. He was intensely drawn to it, but he also considered it "a degradation and a damnation." In his unique spelling of *magic*, the *k* is said to represent the first letter of *kteis*, the Greek word for the female sexual organs. Educated at Cambridge University, Crowley was intelligent and erudite, and he put all the force of his considerable intellect behind the glorification of the subjective will. He fancied himself a great poet, but the most outstanding characteristic of much of his poetic work is its unremitting scatology and obscenity. His many books include works of pornography and sadomasochism as well as voluminous writings on occultism.

In 1898 Crowley joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the most influential of several British occultist societies that flourished at the time. Its membership included W. B. Yeats, *Dracula* author Bram Stoker, and several other prominent literary figures. The Golden Dawn emphasized the psychological element of magic, the occult power in imagination, and the concentration of willpower that would enable the magician to achieve the supreme power of an Ipsissimus, the highest level of the order's system of degrees. But Crowley, who had embarked on an enthusiastic exploration of drugs, sex, and the darker forces of human nature, alarmed the other members and they expelled him two years later.

While living in Cairo in 1904, Crowley produced a short, ecstatic occultist tirade entitled *The Book of the Law*. By now he was convinced that his mission in life was to destroy Christianity, and this rant—which includes such admonitions as "stamp down the wretched and the weak"; "the slaves shall serve"; "kill and torture; spare not"; "these vices are my service; ye do well, and I will reward you"; and "drag down their souls to awful torment: laugh at their fear: spit upon them!"—left little doubt as to the fate he wished for those who stood in his way. Most apologists for Crowley protest that this was all poetic license, but under his influence these and similar sentiments became basic components of much of twentieth-century satanism.

Crowley reportedly urged his followers to gash their arms with a razor whenever they spoke the word / to remind them that the human self must be destroyed before the magician's true work can be accomplished. His rituals sometimes included animal sacrifice, but his position on human offerings is ambiguous. His writings state that an innocent male child is the perfect sacrifice, and he advocates the use of the blood of a child in the making of ritual wafers. There has been much debate over whether these pronouncements were meant literally or figuratively.

In 1907, Crowley formed his own occultist Order of the Silver Star, but it was as the head of the British branch of the Ordo Templi Orientis, a German esoteric order, that he had the most influence. The O.T.O.'s secret teachings involve the practice of sexual magic, in which Crowley indulged with prostitutes, children, animals, and male associates as well as with his numerous wives and mistresses—some of whom he designated his Scarlet Women. In 1916, he assumed the grade of Magus (a high-level title in occultism) during a ceremony in which he crucified a frog and declared his triumph over Jesus Christ.

After World War I, Crowley established the abbey of Thelama—"will" in Greek—in a Sicilian villa, where he indulged in two of his favorite pastimes: no-holds-barred ritual sex magic, and drug abuse. There were rumors of child sacrifice at the abbey, and when an adult follower died on the premises the scandal resulted in Crowley and his followers being expelled from Italy in 1923. Crowley died alone and impoverished in England in 1947, having tried unsuccessfully to cure himself of an addiction to heroin.

By this time, Crowley's followers had established a beachhead in the United States. One such devotee was Dr. John (Jack) Whiteside Parsons, a brilliant physical chemist and founder of the California Institute of Technology, who became head of the Agape Lodge of the O.T.O., based in Pasadena. Parsons was a devout advocate of the philosophy of "no restriction" and was adept at the ecstatic rhetoric of magick, which indiscriminately celebrates both suffering and joy: "Pain is. Terror is, loss and loneliness and agony of heart and spirit, even unto Death. For this is the gateway to the kingdom of Pan." Gilles de Rais is prominent among the sorcerers Parsons hails as heroes in the struggle against "that vermin of Hell that is called the Christian Church."

In 1945, Parsons was joined by Lafayette Ronald Hubbard, who would later go on to found the Church of Scientology.

Parsons was impressed by Hubbard's understanding and appreciation of magick. He and Hubbard embarked on a series of sex-magic rituals aimed at procuring a "familiar spirit," that is, a woman willing to participate in future sex-magic rituals with Parsons in order to persuade a demonic spirit to incarnate itself in a child whom Parsons was to father. Hubbard acted as onlooker and scribe. Parsons wrote ecstatically to Crowley that the ritual—known in occult circles as the Babalon Working—had been a great success, but Crowley was not impressed. "Apparently Parsons or Hubbard or somebody is producing a Moon Child," he complained to the head of another O.T.O. lodge. "I get fairly frantic when I contemplate the idiocy of these louts."

Hubbard and Parsons had a falling-out, and Hubbard subsequently claimed that he had infiltrated the O.T.O. as an agent of Naval Intelligence. However, Hubbard's estranged son, Ron DeWolf, in an interview in the June 1983 issue of *Penthouse* magazine, insisted that his father had been secretly immersed in black magic going back to his teenage years, when he first read Crowley's *Book of the Law*. According to his son, "Hubbard was one of many black magicians who claimed to have inherited Crowley's mantle:

He was very interested in . . . the creation of what some people call the Moon Child. It was basically an attempt to create an immaculate conception, except by Satan rather than by God . . . getting a satanic or demonic spirit to inhabit the body of a fetus. This would come about as a result of black-magic rituals, which included the use of hypnosis, drugs, and other dangerous and destructive practices. . . . [H]e thought of himself as the Beast 666 incarnate . . . the Antichrist. Alistair [ sic ] Crowley thought of himself as such. . . . [W]hen Crowley died in 1947, my father then decided that he should

wear the cloak of the beast and become the most powerful being in the universe."

DeWolf claims that Hubbard considered himself one with Satan, and that Scientology, with its goal of total, godlike knowledge and freedom, is really just a disguised form of satanism. DeWolf also claims that he was ritually abused by his father all during his childhood, a charge that the Church of Scientology angrily denies.

Following Crowley's death there was a lull in the public flaunting of black magic and satanism. But the hippie culture of the 1960s embraced many forms of mysticism and magical thinking, not all of it centered on peace, love, and flower-power. Arthur Lyons relates how, while researching contemporary satanism for his 1970 book *The Second Coming*, he looked up an old girlfriend who was staying with two other young women at a ranch in the California desert. One of the women—both of whom were high on LSD during his visit—was Leslie Van Houten, soon to become a member of the Charles Manson family. Manson's group was a particularly flamboyant and destructive example of the "acid fascist" or "acid satanist" drug-centered cults led by charismatic, authoritarian messianic types. Manson taught his followers that he was both Jesus Christ and Satan, a stance that echoes one of the central ideas of a group called the Process Church of the Final Judgment, which proselytized heavily in California during the late 1960s and which some investigators believe may have influenced Manson.

The Process Church grew out of an earlier group called Compulsions Analysis, which was formed in England in 1964 by Robert and Mary Anne DeGrimston, two former members of the Church of Scientology. The fledgling group attracted wealthy young people, many of whom had connections in business, entertainment, government, and finance. The members relocated their commune to Mexico in 1966, where there were rumors of dark rituals until a hurricane drove them out

in 1967. Shortly thereafter, in cities such as New York and San Francisco, Process members clad in black capes could be seen stalking the streets, recruiting among both the elite and those on the fringes of society.

Process philosophy taught the rather gnostic-sounding belief that Christ and Satan had put aside their enmity and would soon join forces to bring about the end of the world, at which time Christ would judge mankind and Satan would execute the judgment. Members could choose to be followers of Jehovah, Lucifer, or Satan—Robert DeGrimston was thought by members to be Christ—but all were allegedly required to participate in a period of prolonged worship of Satan. The group produced slick, glossy magazines filled with images of death, Nazi symbolism, and exhortations by satanist members to "release the fiend that lies dormant within you" to rape, kill, and destroy. The Process was officially disbanded by 1974, but offshoot cults are said to operate underground. Maury Terry, author of *The Ultimate Evil*, contends that a Process offshoot led by a wealthy Los Angeles professional was responsible for the "Son of Sam" killings and several others.

"When the hippie enclave in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco dispersed at the end of the 1960s, many of its former denizens migrated to the Santa Cruz mountains south of the city. Lyons reports that the area was soon swept by a wave of brutal murders that had sacrificial overtones. Prosecutors found themselves dealing with similar killings in other parts of the country. In June 1970, Steven Hurd and four of his friends were arrested for the murder of a California schoolteacher whom they had stabbed to death and cannibalized after offering her body to Satan. Later that year, Wyoming lumbeijack Stanley Dean Baker was stopped by police on a suspected traffic violation. When questioned about a small human bone found in his possession, Baker explained: "I have a problem. I'm a cannibal." Baker, a self-proclaimed satanist who claimed to belong to a blood-drinking cult, was later convicted of having murdered and dismembered a Mon-

tana social worker named James Schlosser—the previous owner of the finger bone found in Baker's pocket.

Meanwhile, the year 1966 marked the formation of the organization that would officially orchestrate the public coming-out of satanism. Anton LaVey's Church of Satan, from which most of today's active "religious" satanic groups are directly descended, was dismissed as a "joke" by most of the media. Had they been granted the power to see how events would unfold a few years down the road, perhaps they would not have been quite so quick to label LaVey a con artist and buffoon.



## CHAPTER THREE

# Anton's Babies: The Church of Satan and Its Offshoots

*Walpurgisnacht* (April 30) is a busy night on the satanist calendar. That date in 1966 is counted as the "Year One" by many modern satanists. It was on that night that a former carnival performer and lion tamer who had dropped his first name, Howard, for the more sinisterly alluring moniker Anton Szandor LaVey, ceremoniously proclaimed himself high priest of the first official American Church of Satan. LaVey's "church" met in his Victorian row house on California Street in San Francisco, which was painted solid black, in stark contrast to the rest of the neighborhood. There, LaVey, decked out in a red satin devil's cape with a horned hood, presided over satanic weddings, baptisms, and funerals and conducted satanic religious rites before an altar that doubled as the mantelpiece of his living room fireplace. Assuming the horizontal position was the Church of Satan's "living altar," a nude woman, symbolic of the "pleasures of the flesh."

Years spent as a camy had taught LaVey the value of hype, and the Halloween-ball atmosphere of flashy, gaudy "devil-worship" that always surrounded the Church of Satan served several purposes. First and foremost, it guaranteed attention.

Second, and perhaps more important in terms of magic, it made the whole enterprise look like shocking but essentially harmless, nose-thumbing fun. Third, it acted as a filter to screen out those who could not see past the trappings and hype to the more "serious" message of LaVey's watchword: Indulgence. It was Aleister Crowley's "Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be the Whole of the Law" decked out as a Halloween party, just another bizarre outcropping of the California counterculture. The media dismissed LaVey as a harmless con artist but nevertheless flocked to cover his flashily staged "satanic" events. This, of course, was exactly the point. In black magic, the power of a myth, ritual, or organization lies not in its "authenticity" but in its ability to capture the attention of its participants and its audience.

The Church of Satan attracted many curiosity seekers to the Black House, including a number of professionals—doctors, lawyers, teachers, business executives—who came to rub elbows with the more unsavory types at LaVey's weekly seminars. There was also a representative sampling of the local police. LaVey had studied criminology at San Francisco City College and had worked for a time as a photographer and crime-lab technician for the San Francisco Police Department, an experience that he claimed had solidified his cynicism about human nature. He maintained a cordial relationship with the SFPD, bolstered by his strident advocacy of law and order and his commitment to observing the legal niceties regarding the conduct of his "church."

Prior to forming the Church of Satan, LaVey had hosted the Magic Circle, an occult study group that included underground occult filmmaker and Aleister Crowley-enthusiast Kenneth Anger, as well as the proprietress of a sadomasochist sex club. According to LaVey, his philosophy of satanism and black magic was formed during this period: "The black magic path is used for honest gratification of the ego—greed, pride, lust, anger, any of the seven deadly sins." Typically, the Church of Satan would continue in this vein, defining

itself mostly by means of its opposition to the tenets of Christianity even as it stridently proclaimed its independence from the Judeo-Christian religious tradition.

Consistent with his general display of showmanship, LaVey was given to inflating the estimates of the number of members of the Church of Satan to between ten thousand and twenty-five thousand. The actual, hardcore membership probably never surpassed about three hundred. LaVey's chief vehicle of influence on the world outside of the Church of Satan has been his book *The Satanic Bible*, which has sold well over one hundred thousand copies in paperback. Every teenage "dabbler" in the country appears to have devoured the thing, and police sources report that it is almost invariably found among the personal effects of youthful "experimenters" in satanic crime.

One of LaVey's major selling points has always been his enthusiasm for retaliation and vengeance, which he attempts to disguise as justice. However, the Church of Satan clearly views human beings as predators. Number seven of LaVey's Nine Satanic Statements characterizes man as "just another animal, sometimes better, more often worse than those that walk on all-fours, who because of his 'divine spiritual and intellectual development' has become the most vicious animal of all!" This vision of man as predatory beast is the hallmark of satanism's philosophy of masters and slaves and the basis of its might-makes-right morality.

Satanists zero in on contradictions and irrationalities in mainstream religious philosophy and provide dissidents with a sophomoric junk-food substitute for serious intellectual challenge to dogmas. Despite the claims of LaVey and other satanists that they are champions of a rational philosophy, in reality satanism offers only an extended temper tantrum. Thus, it is unable to provide a theory of justice beyond a string of assertions on the level of its Nine Satanic Statements, LaVey's hodgepodge of exclamation-pointed declarations of opposition to conventional morality. The statements call for

"indulgence, instead of abstinence!"; "vital existence, instead of spiritual pipe dreams!"; and "undefiled wisdom, instead of hypocritical self-deceit!" Mired in arbitrary sloganeering like this, even statements advocating "responsibility" and "kindness to those who deserve it" are stripped of any real meaning except for the satanist's subjective whim.

LaVey's frequent disclaimers that no "real" satanist would ever harm an animal or child exist side by side with a steady stream of invective that conveys approval of violence against anyone the satanist chooses. For example, LaVey never tires of reminding the media that his *Satanic Bible* expressly forbids human sacrifice except in the "proxy" form of the destruction ritual, in which the satanist ceremonially focuses his hatred and sends out a kind of malevolent energy force to destroy his intended victim. But LaVey is relentlessly cavalier about how literally that admonition should be taken. Interviewed by a journalist from the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* in 1986, he was questioned about an instruction in *The Satanic Rituals* calling for a human arm or leg bone to be waved about during one of the rites. "I figured people would get the bone someplace other than by killing a person," he averred. "But if they're going to kill, I hope they at least get a deserving victim." Lest this be passed off as an uncharacteristic remark, consider LaVey's statement made during an interview for the 1989 "Modern Primitives" issue of *Re!Search* that anyone he deems "stupid" should be "put to the flamethrower, regardless of race." Indeed, LaVey's misanthropy is so pervasive that he finds disasters depressing because not *enough* people die!

LaVey's chief rival, Temple of Set founder Michael Aquino, is his stylistic opposite. In 1968 Aquino, a former national commander of the Eagle Scouts Honor Society, would have seemed an unlikely candidate for future head of the foremost satanic organization in America. The young U.S. Army lieutenant, already a specialist in intelligence

and psychological warfare, seemed destined instead for a respectable, distinguished military career.

Aquino, who holds a doctorate in political science from the University of California at Santa Barbara, has qualified in the Airborne, Special Forces, Psychological Operations, Strategic Intelligence, and Defense Attache divisions within the military. His involvement in psychological warfare operations goes back to his 1969 tour of duty in Vietnam, when he served as a Tactical Psychological Operations officer in the 82nd Airborne Division. (He received the Bronze Star, the Air Medal, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.) In 1973, having joined the Army Reserve, he became executive officer of the 306th Psychological Operations Battalion at Fort MacArthur in California. A 1979 officer efficiency report commented that Aquino "commands virtually total expertise" in the area of psychological operations.

As Aquino tells it, he first encountered satanism one night in 1968 when he spotted Anton LaVey and a group of his robed followers in the lobby of a San Francisco theater where the film *Rosemary's Baby* was showing. A subsequent visit to one of LaVey's Friday night lectures convinced him that beneath all the Church of Satan's vaudeville hype lay his true spiritual home, and he signed on as a member. In between missions in Vietnam, Aquino composed what would be the first of many satanist fantasies, a reworking of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* glorifying the viewpoint of Satan and the fallen angels, which he called *The Diabolicon*. He shipped off a copy to LaVey, who was sufficiently impressed to promote him to the Church of Satan's priesthood. Upon his return, Aquino began working his way into position as LaVey's left-hand man and editor of the church's newsletter, *The Cloven Hoof*.

By 1972 LaVey no longer held public gatherings at the Black House, but instead focused on the activities of dozens of local Church of Satan groups, called grottoes, which he

hoped to develop into a network of underground satanic cabals. He had instituted an elaborate system of hierarchical degrees that had to be achieved through passage of examinations measuring the aspirant's understanding of the black arts. Aquino's hero-worship of LaVey had extended to his belief that through him Satan had channeled a message of honor to the Church of Satan founder: he was to be designated a "daimon," a "true god" with the power to "alter the machinery of the cosmos."

But now LaVey wanted to bring more money into the Church of Satan, and to this end he announced his intention to grant memberships and degrees in the group in exchange for material contributions. It was a perfectly consistent policy decision for this expansionist-minded satanist, who measured each member's worth by the degree of his or her material success in the outside world. LaVey counted on such members to provide the church with funds and prestige, and had grown impatient with the more insular members like Aquino whose interest lay in climbing the degree ladder. Aquino, faced with the prospect that his formidable occultist erudition and learning would now convey no greater standing than would the cash offerings of the hoi polloi, was devastated over LaVey's alleged "betrayal" of satanist principles. He was also upset with LaVey for treating Satan as a symbolic figurehead rather than as a real "metaphysical presence."

Unable to reconcile himself to LaVey's ultimatum, Aquino conducted a meditation ritual, went into a trance at four in the morning on the summer solstice in June 1975, and appealed directly to Satan. According to him, it was Set, the ancient Egyptian god of darkness and the earliest form of Satan, who answered, and who revealed to him the religious manifesto Aquino calls *The Book of Coming Forth By Night*. In it, Set demotes LaVey and elevates Aquino to the position of prophet of his coming age, the Aeon of Set. (While he was at it, he also designated him the Second Beast from the biblical Book of Revelation.) Aquino thus believes that he has been given

a supernatural mandate to usher in a new satanist religion, and that he has evolved from a mere human into some kind of godlike being with otherworldly powers.

Aquino is alleged to have marked the event by having the number 666, symbol of the Antichrist, tattooed somewhere on his head. The mark is also said to have been inspired by Aquino's favorite celluloid antihero, "Damien," the Antichrist protagonist of the *Omen* movie series. Whatever the case, Aquino's wife denies the claim, and Aquino himself is coy about whether the tattoo exists. Asked point-blank by Oprah Winfrey during an interview, he replied, "Do you see it?" Oprah was not about to go looking. Nor, apparently, was she aware that in his analysis of *The Book of Coming Forth By Night*, Aquino makes the following curious observation:

Collectors of magical happenstance may take note of the following concerning the person of Michael A. Aquino. . . . He was also born dead, raising the question of the nature of the force inhabiting his subsequently revived body. On his chest he bears the same whorled swastika appearing on Crowley and the Buddha, and from infancy his eyebrows have always curled upward into the horns described in the Biblical Book of Revelation #13:11.

Aquino also comments that he was born in 1946, "precisely nine months after a Working by Crowley's California disciples to create a homunculus [an artificial being created by magic] per a secret instruction of Crowley's to the IX° of his Ordo Templi Orientis." It is interesting to note that in his book *The Occult Explosion*, Nat Freedland reports that a Hollywood occultist named Renate Druks told him she believed that Jack Parsons, the California O.T.O. leader who performed the Babalon Working with L. Ron Hubbard, had been "working on some very strange experiments, trying to

create what the old alchemists called a homunculus, a tiny artificial man with magic powers." Parsons died in an explosion in his home laboratory in 1952. Druks suspects it was one of his alchemical experiments gone wrong.

Following his acceptance of Set's revelation, Aquino resigned from the Church of Satan and formed the Temple of Set around himself and several dozen other disgruntled LaVey acolytes. He replaced LaVey's sleazy circus atmosphere with a thick intellectual veneer and a calculated respectability. He knows that one of the best ways to preserve the inner secrets of an occult order is to envelop them in a fog of esoteric occultist verbiage that is virtually indecipherable to the uninitiated. (Aleister Crowley, a past master of this approach, is one of his heroes.) It is prudent to subject virtually every statement Aquino makes regarding the philosophy and intentions of the Temple of Set to careful scrutiny. In recent years, Aquino has even taken to encouraging temple members to learn techniques of stage magic, conjuring, and mentalism, noting that when taken out of their entertainment context such parlor tricks can be used to manipulate and intimidate curious outsiders. Such training is incorporated into Aquino's concept of Lesser Black Magic, or LBM, which involves "techniques of attention control and behavior and attitude manipulation."

Aquino and the Temple of Set are particularly ambiguous on the subject of good and evil. The Setian concept of good and evil is based on the idea that whatever is good for one individual may well be considered evil by someone else, and who is to say who is right and who is wrong? Aquino cautions his followers that "profane" society will tolerate them only if they are "perceived" to be ethical people. By insisting that he disapproves of "destructive behavior" and waving the word *ethical* about like a shield, Aquino usually manages adroitly to sidestep the implications of such a radical philosophy of moral relativism.

Temple of Set members are taught that that their mundane human natures are inferior. They are expected to create their



own magical selves within a unique universe, a superior dimension of magical reality governed by each magician's subjective morality. This process tends to create a split in the members' personalities, as "magical" lives take on a sort of hyperreality that overshadows their everyday existence. The temple scorns the use of many common mind-control practices such as chanting or food and sleep deprivation. But the emphasis on intense, meditative ritual, combined with the overwhelming volume of study materials in the black magic arts, LBM techniques, and other subjects, is likely to monopolize whatever free time the member might have and focus his or her attention totally on the temple. The pressure to become one of the magical 'Elect' of such an 'elite' organization and the accompanying contempt shown for the rest of society can aggravate members' sense of alienation from the outside world, sometimes to the point of paranoia, and can foster an extreme dependence on the group as a source of self-validation.

A Temple of Set member who resigned several years ago sadly recalled how the illusion that he was thus spiritually "evolving" blinded him to the fact that he was actually giving up his freedom and independence as he strove to conform to the group's definition of a "higher being." Gradually the temple became his fortress against the threatening masses of zombielike "humans" who inhabited the "howling world" outside. His identity became totally fused with that of the group, and, like most of the other members, he could no longer conceive of giving it up. Not until he was willing to come to terms with the fact that he was living a lie did he find the strength to leave, and to survive.

One of the ways the temple reinforces this sense of alienation is through its exclusive focus on the dark, mysterious, and forbidden side of reality and human existence. It is a world where sunlight seldom penetrates. The new temple member, who more often than not has a preexisting interest in the occult, receives an extensive list of recommended read-

ings focused mainly on subjects such as ancient Egypt, demonology, vampirism, Nazism, and the entire historical spectrum of occultism and satanism. Aquino, who believes that "every silver cloud has its dark lining," is particularly adept at infusing this midnight world with a sort of Wagnerian grandiosity. His formidable intellect is combined with the ability to wrap his brand of satanism in an aura of romantic rebellion and misunderstood nobility.

The Temple of Set may be the most familiar offshoot of the Church of Satan, but since the late 1960s dozens of other spin-off satanic groups have come and, usually, gone. Most of these minicults have been energetic but short-lived expressions of their founders' power fantasies. However, they share one consistent characteristic: While few of them qualify as overtly racist or anti-Semitic, most can be classified as "hate groups" on account of their wide-ranging, obsessive hostility toward outsiders and vituperative condemnation of the entire spectrum of Judeo-Christian religious culture.

How often these attitudes translate into destructive behavior is a matter of debate. The Church of Satan and the Temple of Set insist that they demand certain standards of conduct from their members and strongly deny any suggestion that they engage in criminal activity under the banner of satanism. However, some troubled individuals may have fallen through the holes in their vaunted screening processes.

In May 1991, the police department of East Greenwich, Rhode Island, received complaints from occupants of an apartment house that they were being terrorized by a satanic cult operating out of the basement. Investigating officers were confronted with the head of a dead cat that had been affixed to the mailbox. Once inside the basement apartment, they arrested Joseph Criscione and Joseph Almeida, both in their early twenties. The two had been seen toting dead snakes and cats into the building and had boasted of killing dozens of animals. Two tenants of the basement apartment, Mark Botelho and Michael Steele, complained that Criscione and Al-

meida had forced their way into the place and threatened them. They told police that Criscione and Almeida were Satan worshippers and that Criscione claimed to be a demon and to have had sex with corpses.

The police executed a search warrant and acquired a collection of animal bones, books on satanism and the occult, a chalice, candles, a glass jar of what appeared to be blood, several pieces of jewelry, a dead snake, and, of course, the cat head. Two days later, Botelho and Steele were also arrested and charged with conspiracy to commit cruelty to animals. The police declined to accept their claim that Criscione and Almeida had coerced them into participating in satanic activities, especially after Almeida provided a grisly description of an outdoor ritual in which a cat was tortured and killed, its blood poured into a chalice and passed among all four young men.

Michael Steele told police that at Criscione's apartment in Providence he had seen bags of dirt and a gravestone that had been lifted from a cemetery in that city. A second warrant issued for these "ritual items used in violation of law" produced the headstone of one John Wester, several leather pouches full of soil allegedly taken from the graveyard, and notebooks filled with incriminating entries. Criscione and his sidekick, Almeida, were charged with breaking and entering and grave desecration. '

When the evidence from the two apartments arrived at the police station, it was examined by Detective Sergeant Edmund Pierce, the Warwick, Rhode Island, Police Department's resident expert on occult- and satanism-related crime. Pierce, who has amassed a sizable collection of confiscated occult paraphernalia, readily identified the items as the implements and literature of a "Satan-worship group." When he showed me photographs of the jewelry that had been confiscated I identified a large white enamel medallion bearing an inverse pentagram as a first-degree membership medallion of the type specially made for and issued by the Temple of Set.

It had belonged to Joseph Criscione, and was found in the company of introductory-level Temple of Set material, including Michael Aquino's essay "Black Magic in Theory and Practice." The police had also photographed an altar they found in Criscione's apartment. It featured representations of both the Church of Satan-type "Baphomet" pentagram and the characteristic simplified Temple of Set version, plus a copy of the masthead drawing of Set and the pentagram from the Temple's newsletter, *The Scroll*.

All four suspects were eventually charged with unlawful killing of an animal and grave desecration. But Joseph Criscione's case never went to trial. Several months after his arrest, he was found dead of a drug overdose. His death was ruled a suicide. Mark Botelho and Joseph Almeida were convicted, received suspended sentences, and were placed on two and three years probation, respectively. Both were ordered to do ten hours of community service. Michael Steele's case is still pending.

There are other indications that some people associated with the Temple of Set may not be conducting themselves in strict accordance with the rules of decorum laid down in the group's official publications. Consider the obscure little group known as the Church of Raven, whose membership includes an individual whose name also appeared on a 1990 Temple of Set roster. This Church of Raven's taste appears to run to a crude version of necromancy (communicating with the dead), long a staple of black magic. The cult's Black Thorn-Death Rite, or Hell Ritual of the Living Dead, ghoulishly mixes sex, death, hostility, revenge fantasies, and the degradation of women into one repulsive little package.

The aim of the rite is to raise the spirit of a recently deceased person and force it to destroy an enemy. To this end, several cult members, led by a high priest or "necrophite" — a practitioner of death—sneak into a cemetery in the middle of the night. There they set up an altar, which the necrophite sprinkles with dirt from the freshest grave he can find while

intoning: "From the flesh and bones that rot below far away, I command Lucifer, Prince of Hell, to gather thy essence and bring forth thy psychic form!" He then engages in "wild sex" with a female member (or with himself, if no female is available) on the altar, all the while focusing on the name of the deceased. Following this portion of the ritual, the female celebrant—a.k.a. the "vessel," —may invite other male participants to follow the example of the necrophite. The catch is that she is required to "remain motionless as if dead on the altar for the remainder of the ritual."

The sex part of the ritual completed, the necrophite climbs off the altar, puts his robe back on, lights some candles, and ceremoniously calls on the spirit of the dead to come forth: "Satan, Great Lucifer welcomes you . . . Thou art here! Thou art here! Thou art here! The maggots scream!" At this point he is cautioned to "be strong of will as a great howling might occur as the spirit appears." Now under the control of the cultists, the deceased is given its marching orders: "Go now with Lucifer's speed and thy rotting stinking wrath and be upon [victim's name]. . . . By Satan's power you will return to your grave and by my will you will sleep. Satan conquers death! Hail Satan! Hail Satan! Hail Satan!" With that, the ritual is over, the candles are extinguished, and, assuming that the local police have not arrived on the scene to investigate the disturbance, everyone goes home.

Satanism is often associated with uninhibited sexual activities, and satanic sexual ritual tends to be characterized by a near-obsession with the wild and forbidden. Even some members of the relatively sedate Temple of Set have openly expressed an interest in sadomasochistic sex and the philosophy of the Marquis de Sade. In a review incorporated into the Temple of Set recommended reading list, Michael Aquino asserts that the infamous adult film *The Story of O* is not about sadomasochism but concerns "the degrees of mutual surrender that love involves." The film's heroine is caged and subjected to various tortures. At one point she tells her

lover that it is only when he makes her suffer that she feels safe. "Now you must learn to relish my tears," she insists, for he is a god to her and must assume godly powers over her life. In Aquino's interpretation, she "willingly endures the ordeals . . . simply because her lover wishes her to, then emerges not as slave but as goddess for the three men . . . who are devoted to her."

Most other satanic groups are openly sexual, and many display a misogynistic perspective in which women are reduced to little more than pliant receptacles for libidinous males or, alternatively, as scheming, domineering gold-diggers. Women, even when willing participants, are chronically demeaned as "symbolic sacrifices" at satanic sex rituals. Sex is used as a way to connect with the powers of darkness by erotically exercising power over others. When the other side of the coin comes up, it is usually in the form of "feminist" satanists who focus on using "women's wiles" to manipulate rich men. Thus, all relationships between men and women are reduced to power games in which the woman trades beauty and sex for cash.

Characterizing this approach is the Temple of the Elite, founded by Lynn Nelson. In 1986, Michael Aquino expelled her from the Temple of Set for "misconduct." He has more recently complained of her blatant imitation of Temple of Set materials, which Nelson cheerfully acknowledges. For her part, Nelson projects a gung-ho, cynical pragmatism that is startling even in a satanist. Her Temple of the Elite's particular brand of satanic magic, which she calls the Red Arts, is focused largely on the image of the conniving woman who cultivates her sex appeal for fun and profit, with a noticeable slant toward the dominatrix model. According to Nelson, men are just "horny, oversexed, hungry high animals" and the well-educated Elitist should exercise the "true whoredom" that will reward her with all the money and luxuries she deserves.

Other satanists prefer the unvarnished huckster approach.

Among the most hilariously shrill is the Continental Association of Satan's Hope—CASH for short—a group operating out of a post office box in Montreal. CASH uses the symbols of the Church of Satan in its logo, although there seems to be no formal connection. Its promotional flyer is a classic example of satanist snake-oil salesmanship:

Let CASH end your financial problems! . . . Whatever you need or want, our lord Satan can get it for you quickly and easily! . . . The infernal power of our lord Satan can realize your deepest ambitions! . . . Let his infernal power bring you expensive jewelry, cars, fantastic expense-free vacations!. . . You can use Satanic power to dominate others! Control your boss where you work! Make someone love you! Attract women! Attract men!

Satanists such as these place less value on talent, integrity, and hard work than on cultivating a fantasy of utilizing demonic powers to defeat one's competition.

Indeed, even some satanists openly admit that many of their fellow devotees are, in the words of one former Church of Satan member, "sleazy, manipulative, cruel, and unethical." Despite the strident claims that "real" satanists do not engage in child molestation or other destructive behavior, the pages of satanist periodicals are filled with testimonials like those of the forty-two-year-old man who exulted that his "passions for young girls, incest, girl-on-girl, girls with animals, and many other forms of erotic [s/c] are caused by a 'Devil' within me," to whom he gleefully pledged allegiance. While these traits do not characterize all satanists, they are certainly prevalent enough to encourage caution and skepticism when evaluating satanists' claims to "ethical" principles.

Satanic groups feud with one another continually and have for years carried on a running dispute with elements of the

wider occult subculture, particularly with the loosely organized network of neopagan religionists. Recently, concerns have been raised within that community that Aquino is spearheading a drive by the Temple of Set to co-opt the modern pagan movement and mainstream the temple's own agenda. This is an ironic development, as the Setians have traditionally regarded "white witches" with contempt. Some pagans are concerned that associating with satanists will tarnish their hard-earned reputation as opponents of malevolent occultism.

One satanism-influenced group that has been accused of illegal activities calls itself Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth, or TOPY. Based in the United States and with chapters in the United Kingdom, Holland, Germany, and Sweden, TOPY was started in 1981 by "Genesis P. Orridge," a musician in the "industrial" band Throbbing Gristle. Some TOPY members engage in "self-liberation" through ritual sex magic that can include self-mutilation, making small cuts to the skin to release energy that might otherwise, they believe, cause madness or violence.

TOPY appears to be less an organized cult than a loose network of like-minded participants, mostly young, single white males. In a one-page manifesto reprinted in an Australian satanist newsletter, TOPY describes itself as a "Magickal Order" that believes "all repressive elements, whether they are social, personal, or whatever, should be seen as obstacles on your path that you should seek to remove with Joy." Whatever is "natural" to you is considered good and moral, and anyone who opposes that represents the forces of repression and is therefore evil. "We refuse control on whatever level there might possibly be," the manifesto continues. As evidenced by its incorporation of the term *magick*, TOPY draws on the teachings of Aleister Crowley. Other influences include the Church of Satan, Nietzsche, anarchism, and a whole catalog of antiestablishment sources—basically "anything or anyone who is anti-dogma, anti-bureaucracy, anti-'absolute Truth.'" "



TOPY describes itself as a worldwide network of initiates—females are designated Kalis, males are Coyotes—involved in publishing, recording, and performing. While TOPY, like the Temple of Set, prefers to characterize itself as an association of superior beings, the reality is a bit less elevated, as the group also lists among its interests "tortures, cults, wars, psychological techniques of persuasion, forensic pathology, venereology, and concentration camp behavior." TOPY acknowledges that its members often "shock, disgust, or worry their families and other members of the public." But then, that's the whole purpose of the group—"to redefine boundaries, rules, and accepted behavior to find out 'what is really you.' "

Exactly how shocking and disgusting the behavior of TOPY members can get was dramatically illustrated in 1992 when Scotland Yard mistook one of P. Orridge's promotional films for actual footage of satanic ritual abuse. The controversy began when *The Observer*, a London newspaper, obtained the videotape and featured it in a televised documentary on the British Channel 4's *Dispatches*. Reporter Andrew Boyd characterized the video as showing "the abuse of young adults in what is clearly a ritual context." The Yard's Obscene Publications Branch obtained the tape and verified its authenticity with the aid of medical experts. Among the identifiable images in the darkly lit video were what appeared to be scenes of rape, child molestation, sadomasochistic bondage, a man being smeared with urine and feces and cut with a knife, and an abortion, all of it interspersed with satanic symbols.

The tape had been given to Channel 4 by a therapist who was treating a young woman who claimed to have escaped from the cult that had produced the tape. Rumors of the tape had allegedly long circulated "on the fringes of the music business." According to the Yard, members of this cult had previously been jailed for violence and pornography.

Shortly thereafter, another London daily, the *Mail*, revealed that the film was actually a 1982 promotional video

that had been put together by Genesis P. Orridge and other members of Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth, including Orridge's wife, Paula, who took part willingly in the S&M scenes. Not that there was anything surprising about that revelation. The Orridges are dedicated enthusiasts of the fast-growing counterculture fad of body piercing, genitals and all, which they flaunted in an article featured in the "Modern Primitives" issue of *Re/Search*. The *Mail* characterized the Orridges and TOPY as "lewd, disgusting people involved in all types of extreme sexual behaviour." But they were not known to be child abusers, the *Mail* insisted.

About one hundred copies of the video reportedly had been circulating throughout the sexually deviant underground for several years. The occult subculture reacted to the misidentification with crows of triumph and derision. As for the Orridges, they were on vacation in Thailand when the police raided their apartment and carted away a truckload of evidence.

In 1984, Nikolas Schreck and his partner, Zeena LaVey, daughter of Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey, founded a group called the Werewolf Order. Its motto is "to unleash the beast in man," and it promotes a vision of supermen and slaves patterned explicitly on the relationship between predators and prey, extrapolated into the realm of human interaction, where it has no proper place.

Zeena was publicly baptized into satanism by her father when she was three. Taking her origins very seriously indeed, she sees herself as a born satanist, a "magical child" sired by a "daemonic energy" for which her father was but the unwitting agent. As part of her education as a proper satanic young lady, Zeena's father taught her how to crack a bullwhip by age nine, "so by the time I was eleven I was already attracting boys who needed to be told what to do."

Zeena took up with Charles Manson enthusiast Nikolas Schreck sometime in the 1980s. For a while, they acted as spokespersons for the Church of Satan, which returned the

compliment by distributing Werewolf Order literature. But eventually Zeena openly broke with her father, and in a conciliatory letter to former adversary Michael Aquino, she announced that on April 30, 1990—*Walpurgisnacht*, that date often reserved on the satanist calendar for events of great import—she had "officially and ritually" called it quits both as Church of Satan spokesperson and as Anton LaVey's daughter.

In Zeena's view, LaVey is a cynical charlatan, good for nothing beyond impregnating Zeena's mother, Diane, a natural sorceress who Zeena alleges was the real power behind the Church of Satan. But beneath all this satanic-soap-opera bickering there is another, more ominous theme. As co-director with Schreck of the Werewolf Order, Zeena—who has been called the *Fiihrerin* of the satanist movement—is casting aside the "Eastern and negative Judeo-Christian imagery" of the Church of Satan in favor of the "Western European magical tradition" —in this context, a euphemism for Teutonic mythology.

The Werewolf Order shares with the Manson family a belief in the sacred liberating power of embracing fear: "Fear is the key to enlightenment and only by befriending it can the mind be totally free. Terror. Dread. Horror: these are the magical tools of the initiate in the process of attaining mastery of the soul."

In keeping with their belief in "the monster as sacred archetype and liberating symbol of all that is forbidden," the Werewolf Order's symbol is the Fenris Wolf of Norse mythology. Spawn of the god Loki, raised in Asgard, the home of the gods, the Fenris Wolf grew so huge and fierce that he terrified the gods themselves. When they tried to bind him up, he snapped through every fetter until at last he was bound with a chain made of all the silent and secret things of the world. At the time of Ragnarok—the destruction of the gods in Norse mythology, heralded by hatred, incest, murder, and warfare—the great Wolf will break the chain and devour

the world. The Fenris Wolf is the very image of apocalypse, fitting for the Werewolf Order, which claims to represent the sacred forces of destruction: "From the fall of Atlantis to the rise of the Third Reich and beyond, we have monitored and engineered every 'catastrophe' and 'disaster' that has blessed mankind."

This barbaric mythology supports the Werewolf Order's goal of creating "an international network of men and women of action dedicated to the creation of a new Satanic world order." To this end, "an unholy war for dominion of this earth" will be waged by the "warrior priests and priestesses" of the order, the "lone wolves who shun the bovine herd of humankind and seek to fulfill their ancient legacy of power and mastery of the world."

Estimates of the current size and composition of the Werewolf Order are hard to come by, given the group's extremely secretive nature and the implications of its membership policy. The order scorns public recruiting and advocates proselytizing primarily among one's friends and immediate family. The resulting "wolfpacks" are referred to as "WO Dens." Naturally, in keeping with the wolfpack metaphor, Schreck and Zeena see themselves as the Alpha male and female of the movement, in charge of a worldwide network of WO Dens. The Werewolf Order maintains a headquarters in Los Angeles and also has a base of operations in Europe.

Rehabilitating individuals who have come to personify evil incarnate in the minds of most people is a virtual obsession among satanists. Adolf Hitler is one favorite; Charles Manson is another. On August 8, 1988, the Werewolf Order co-sponsored a public ritual celebration that included a video dramatization of the murder of Sharon Tate and others by members of the Manson family. While this was being shown, Zeena and Anton (who were still on speaking terms) stood with other satanists onstage and read from *The Satanic Bible*. Whenever the subject of the "8-8-88" satanic extravaganza comes up, Zeena and Schreck try to explain away criticism

of the event as "simplistic" carping by those who fail to realize that the Church of Satan was "the last bastion of order" in the freewheeling sixties.

The Werewolf Order's media arms, Radio Werewolf and Video Werewolf, market much of their output through AES-NIHIL Productions of California. The moniker is short for Aesthetic Nihilism. AES-NIHIL is devoted to the distribution of material extolling the virtues of murder and mayhem. One of their favorite subjects is Charles Manson. Others include Jim Jones and the People's Temple massacre, satanism, mass murder, serial killers, racial conflict, drugs, pornography, vampirism, and a collection of O.T.O. rituals. There is also a special category entitled "The Nazi Dream Quest for Unknown Perfection," which includes such classics as the vicious Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda film *The Eternal Jew*.

In the late 1980s, the Werewolf Order's demonic duo took to promoting their ideas on the television talk-show circuit. Around Halloween 1988, Nick and Zeena appeared on the now infamous Geraldo Rivera two-hour television special on satanism. Zeena sat on the stage next to Michael Aquino and persistently insisted that real satanists never actually do anything bad.

Schreck was interviewed via satellite from the West Coast. Dressed entirely in black, his dyed blond hair pinched into a sharp widow's peak, he spoke in a flat, emotionless voice. His brief comments certainly served to set a tone that might make one wonder about the consistency between the beliefs of satanists and their alleged actions—or lack of it. "We would like to see most of the human race killed off, because it is unworthy of the gift of life," Schreck sneered, demonstrating his fondness for Hitlerian phrases. "A bloodbath would be a cleansing and a purification of a planet that has been dirtied and degraded for too long."

Around Halloween 1989, Nick and Zeena were back on television to expand on this theme with Sally Jessy Raphael. The haughty Schreck's now-thinning widow's peak was black

this time around, but his eyes had the same flat, lifeless quality familiar to viewers of the Geraldo special. On his left sleeve he sported the Werewolf Order insignia, depicting the Fenris Wolf. Zeena's appearance conjured up a vision of her sister-in-satanism, the late Jayne Mansfield, in vampire drag—pale skin, bleached blond mane, black clothes, dark red lips and matching talonlike nails. (Mansfield, who had been a Church of Satan member in its heyday, died in an auto accident that Anton LaVey at one time suggested was the result of a curse he had put on her boyfriend, Sam Brody.)

When Sally asked Nick about the Werewolf Order, he replied that he had founded it in 1984 "as a vanguard for the coming satanic century, because we have been defined by Christians and our enemies for too long. Now satanists are coming out of the underground to reveal what satanism is, in the media." Schreck readily admitted that his goal is the annihilation of the Judeo-Christian population of the world.

These, then, are some of the foremost examples of the so-called respectable and legitimate satanic "religious organizations" that are actively working to gain recruits and influence American society. While their First Amendment rights must be respected, it is necessary to consider the impact such groups can have upon impressionable young people who come under their influence.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# Satanism, Crime and Youth

Over the past ten years or so, law enforcement officers in every state in the country have been confronted with criminal activities perpetrated by young persons—teenagers and even preteens—who have become obsessed with violent and aggressive forms of satanism. Their crimes cover the full spectrum of destructive and illegal activities, from minor acts of vandalism such as the spray painting of satanic graffiti to cemetery desecration and grave robbing, arson, drug trafficking, rape, theft (especially of religious articles), cruelty to animals, child molestation, assault, and, in some cases, murder. Through repeated exposure to satanism- and occult-related youth crime, a growing number of police have gained a level of expertise in dealing with this problem.

Sergeant Alan Alves is a detective with the Criminal Investigation Division of the police department in Freetown, Massachusetts, a bit south of Fall River, the town made famous by Lizzie Borden. In 1981, Carl Drew, a Fall River pimp and self-styled leader of a satanic cult that included several prostitutes, was convicted for the brutal ritualized murder of Karen Marsden. Drew recounted his exploits during meetings of his primitive little cult, which were held in the apartment

of a Fall River hooker who had decorated her living room wall with a large and garish mural-portrait of Satan. When the weather permitted, they moved their celebrations to nearby 10,000-acre Freetown State Forest. From time to time, Alves and other officers still find signs of satanic activities in the forest, where ritual sites can remain undiscovered for years. Cultists who meet there are careful to conceal their activities, digging pits beneath overhanging trees to cover the flames and smoke from their small ceremonial fires.

— Carl Drew has been in prison for years, but local authorities are all too aware that remnants of his small cult continue. Since the late 1980s, twelve more local prostitutes have disappeared, their skeletal remains subsequently turning up along local highways. (Prostitutes are easy targets for serial killers; literally hundreds of them have been the victims of unsolved murders over the past decade.) Officially, these crimes remain unsolved but have not been linked to any satanic or ritual activity. Unofficially, the questions remain.

Over a dozen years ago, while Alves was investigating a murder that had nothing to do with satanism, he stumbled across some interesting items. One such discovery was a carefully constructed wooden cross, ten feet high by seven feet along the crossbeam, lashed to some trees. Yellow twine had been used to secure the cross to the tree branches, and leather thongs set at each end of the crossbeam suggested that someone might have been strapped to it by the wrists. Contributing to this suspicion was the fact that several blood-stained towels and articles of clothing, some bearing cigarette burns, were found at the base of the cross. The police theorized that it had been used for some kind of ritual torture by the satanic cult they were investigating in connection with the Carl Drew case. Informants from the group had taken the cops on a tour of the forest, pointing out ritual sites and a rock formation that had been used as an altar.

Within the forest a site known as "the ledge"—a steep stone rock face that rises above an abandoned quarry pond—



is traditionally decorated with an assortment of devil-face drawings, skulls, inverted pentagrams and crosses, and satanic slogans. Groups of people ranging from youthful Dungeons and Dragons players to more sinister types are frequently seen in the surrounding woods. In late 1988, police discovered a camouflaged hut, thatched and well insulated, with three of its four walls covered with carefully drawn pentagrams and occult symbols and writing. A broken table may have once served as an altar. More disturbing was the discovery of several headless wax dolls that had been nailed to a cross. Nearby, investigators discovered an underground log structure, which also contained a makeshift altar. Another site yielded a ceremonial dagger, a "witch's hat," and pieces of animal skull. Yet another featured a large pentagram made of stones carefully laid out on the ground. Whether its intended meaning was pagan or satanist is unknown.

In southeastern Massachusetts, the authorities have learned not to take such portents lightly. Private investigator John Perry, a former police officer who now specializes in investigations of occult-related crimes, believes that eight to twelve local murders might be tied to satanic cult activity over the past ten years, although he admits it would be difficult to prove.

What Alves and others have found to be much easier to document are incidents of satanists—usually "dabbling" teenagers—preying upon those already deceased by engaging in cemetery desecration and grave robbing. Police all over the country have run into adolescent body snatchers bent on exhuming corpses for purposes ranging from satanic rituals to fantasy role-playing games that get out of hand. Grave robbing is a misdemeanor, but actually removing a corpse is a felony. This takes such activity well out of the range of teenage "mischief."

Other, more enterprising individuals have been caught looking for skulls and other bones—and even, in some cases, for freshly interred bodies—to sell to cults or as requirements

for admission. One recent Halloween, Freetown police discovered that someone had broken in to a one-hundred-year-old mausoleum, pried open the likeliest-looking crypt, and removed the body of one Angie Littlefield, who had been laid to rest there in 1914. They had dragged the semimummified corpse onto the floor and decapitated it. Alves arrested two fifteen-year-olds who said they needed the skull as the price of admission to a satanic cult—a story that has been heard with variations all over the country. The head was later found in the woods; the kid driving the getaway car was afraid of being discovered with a mummified head in his possession and had dumped it there, intending to return for it later.

As Alves continued his investigation of the case, he discovered more satanic imagery in the home of one of the young suspects. In his bedroom was a large poster of Charles Manson. **THEE TEMPLE OV PSYCHICK YOUTH** was painted on the walls. The boy had previously been arrested for rearranging the letters of a church marquee to spell out an obscene message and, on another occasion, for pouring a substance resembling blood onto a figure of the Christ child in a local nativity scene and leaving a black candle and several small bones on the altar. As Alves's investigations suggested, the boy's break-in and skull theft at the mausoleum was not an isolated incident, but part of a pattern of satanic activity. It is a familiar pattern to those police, mental-health professionals, social-service providers, and others who deal with the reality of adolescent and young adult involvement in satanism.

The extremes that youthful immersion in satanism can lead to have been well documented in news reports of lurid cases where a lone, obsessed young satanist, or a small group of such individuals, have gone from animal sacrifice to bigger game. Some of these cases have received extensive media coverage. In fact, since 1984 there has been at least one sensational satanism-related murder case per year. There were portents even before then. In 1983, Scott Waterhouse, a teenage self-proclaimed satanist from Maine, was convicted of

the strangulation murder of twelve-year-old Gycelle Cote. At his trial, the prosecution played a tape-recorded interview in which Waterhouse stated that satanism represents the darker side of human nature and encourages the indulgence of carnal needs. He cited passages from Anton LaVey's *Satanic Bible* characterizing human beings as "predatory animals" whose instinct is to prey upon weaklings.

Waterhouse's conviction was appealed to the Maine Supreme Judicial Court on grounds that the prosecution's disclosure of his interest in satanism was prejudicial. But the appeals court upheld the jury's decision, concluding that Waterhouse's satanist beliefs could rightfully be considered "probative of motive" for his decision to gratify himself by destroying a young girl he looked upon as weak and deserving of such a fate. In the course of the many cases that were to follow, the court's clear thinking on this issue was far too seldom recalled.

In 1984, the first of a series of highly publicized murders by "dabbling" teenagers sent shock waves through the Long Island, New York, town of Northport. Ricky Kasso, age seventeen, a drug-dealing self-styled satanist nicknamed the Acid King, hanged himself in his jail cell following his arrest for the murder of Gary Lauwers, also seventeen. The killing had been precipitated by a dispute over drugs, but Kasso carried it out as a sacrifice to the Devil, forcing his victim to say "I love Satan" before stabbing him to death. Instructed in the techniques of black magic by adult satanist "Pat Pagan," Kasso had tried with varying degrees of success to involve his friends and drug clients in devil-worship. Captured by the camera's lens as he was led to his cell, the defiant fanaticism of Kasso's devotion to Satan flashed from his eyes onto the front pages and television screens of America.

Metaphorically speaking, the devil certainly seemed to be taking up residence in an increasing number of disturbed young men. In 1986, seventeen-year-old Sean Sellers was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to execution,

making him the youngest inmate on death row at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary. Sellers, the troubled product of a disordered family life, had escaped into satanism and fantasy role-playing games to gain him a sense of power that he lacked in real life. It was a cruel illusion that turned the honor student and athlete into a disheveled, obsessed acolyte of darkness who often stayed up all night reading books on satanism and performing rituals at an altar he had constructed in his bedroom. He drank, he used drugs, he found a few like-minded friends who took to performing blood-drinking rites in a deserted farmhouse. He tortured and sacrificed animals. It whetted his appetite for the true sacrifice—that of a human. An enthusiastic reader of Anton LaVey's *Satanic Bible*, Sellers had written in his diary that people he considered obnoxious had no right to live. In September 1985, at the climax of what he later described as a sacrificial ritual, he shot to death a convenience-store clerk who had earlier refused to sell him beer. The murder "opened a new portal" for him, and he "plunged into Satanism with everything I had." Several months later, he concluded yet another ritual of death, this one at the altar in his room, after stealing into the bedroom where his mother and stepfather slept and shooting them both to death.

If Sean Sellers and Ricky Kasso were less than successful in forming close-knit satanic cults among their peers, perhaps it was because they lacked the leadership and organizational skills of James Hardy, the president of his senior class in Carl Junction, a suburb of Joplin, Missouri. Hardy's little cult consisted of himself and three classmates: Ron Clements, Theron "Pete" Roland, and Steve Newberry. One night in 1987, the other members ganged up on Steve with baseball bats, beat him to death, and dumped his body into a cistern they had named the Well of Hell. Hardy, whose election to class president had apparently been accomplished in a spirit of irony, had a reputation for being obsessed with those aspects of satanism conducive to animal torture. He and the

three others had been working on their brand of designer rituals for months, incorporating elements culled from occult books, horror movies, heavy-metal music, and their own poetic musings on pain, death, and mutilation. Somewhere along the line, Hardy, Clements, and Roland had decided that Newberry was an inferior being. They had planned to sacrifice him on Halloween but "things did not work out," so it was not until December 7 that Steve was lured out of his house to attend a cat sacrifice. After the cat was dispatched, Hardy turned the baseball bat he was wielding on Steve.

"Why me?" Steve asked.

"Because it's fun," Ron Clements replied:

The crime did not come as a complete surprise to the classmates of the "Hardy boys." Rumors that Newberry had been slated as a sacrificial offering had circulated for weeks, the alleged rationale being that Steve had reneged on a cocaine deal. Whatever the reason, the surviving three members of this minicult are now serving life terms without possibility of parole.

As an interesting aside, in his book *Painted Black*, Dr. Carl Raschke reports that Pete Roland was fascinated with Nazis and kept in his room a drawing of a skeleton wearing a Nazi helmet and swastika, a genocide fantasy commemorating Hitler. "I thought all the time about Auschwitz," he said. "That's what I wanted to do." Hardy allegedly went further, organizing a Klan-style cross burning one night.

In 1988, the public was presented with dramatic evidence of a particularly disturbing feature of the growing numbers of satanic crimes and suicides committed by teenagers: the extreme youth of some of the perpetrators and victims. Thomas Sullivan, Jr., was only fourteen when he slashed his mother to death in the basement of their New Jersey home. The product of a strict religious upbringing, the boy's fascination with the occult had apparently been ignited by his research into witchcraft for a religion report to his eighth-grade class at a local parochial school. Friends reported that he had

told them of seeing visions of the Devil, who had ordered him to kill his family and go out into the world to preach satanism. After using his Boy Scout knife to kill his mother, Tommy tried to kill his father and brother by setting fire to the house before fleeing out into the winter night. His body was found the next day in a neighbor's yard, where he had committed suicide by slashing his throat and wrists. Even the hardened police officers who investigated the crime scene were shocked by the savagery of the wounds inflicted on both mother and son.

Over the Labor Day weekend of 1989, Westley Allan Dodd stabbed to death brothers William and Cole Neer, ages ten and eleven, as they rode their bikes through David Douglas Park in Vancouver. Two months later, Dodd snatched four-year-old Lee Iseli from a Portland, Oregon, schoolyard and took the child back to his Vancouver apartment. There he raped and strangled the boy. Arrested while trying to kidnap yet another boy, Dodd pleaded guilty. A search of his apartment turned up photographs of his crimes, along with a diary that defense attorneys tried to keep the prosecution from reading in court at his sentencing, lest it create an "inflammatory" atmosphere. In it, Dodd had outlined a formal contract with Satan, who was to provide him with a supply of young boys to rape. Dodd was hanged in 1992, after refusing clemency and affirming his intention to kill again should he ever be released.

Incidents of violence committed by satanism-obsessed youths continue to occur with depressing regularity.

In July 1990, Stephanie Dubay, a fifteen-year-old runaway from the Detroit area, was strangled and stabbed to death "on a whim" by self-proclaimed satanist Jaime Rodriguez, age twenty-one, and his fifteen-year-old cousin. Rodriguez then dismembered the body, carefully putting a few parts away to use as charms. These included Dubay's skull, which he stashed in his freezer. When a female relative stopped by to visit, he showed her his new souvenir. The woman grabbed

the head in its plastic bag and made a dash for the nearest police station. The responding officers arrived just in time to interrupt Rodriguez and his cousin in the act of burying the rest of the body parts in the backyard. Rodriguez had intended to wear Dubay's right index-finger bones around his neck, but his arrest interrupted those plans. He felt neither remorse nor pleasure over the murder. God had given up on him, he said, so he had gone out and found a god who would love him.

On May 5, 1993, three eight-year-old boys vanished from their West Memphis, Arkansas, neighborhood while riding their bicycles together. Their bludgeoned bodies were found the next day in a drainage ditch. Early in June, police arrested Charles Baldwin, age sixteen, Jesse Misskelley, age seventeen, and Michael Echols, age eighteen. Shortly thereafter, details began to emerge. Rumors that the killings had been ritualistic proved to be well founded: One of the children had been sexually mutilated; another, raped.

Despite the cries by friends and relatives that the suspects were "good boys" who "couldn't possibly" have done such a terrible thing, the arrests were not a great surprise to the community. The accused had already built themselves a reputation as "dabblers" in the darker side of the occult. According to a twenty-seven-page statement by Echols reprinted in the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, the boys engaged in sex "orgees" and rituals where they sacrificed and ate dogs. Echols, the leader of the little pack, called himself Damien after the young Antichrist of the *Omen* movie series. Dressed in his customary black attire, "Damien" toted a cat skull to school most days and boasted of killing animals and worshipping Satan. Jesse Misskelley told his father that Echols liked to drink blood. Echols himself had told a former teacher that he wanted to dominate and hurt people. "He's like some wacko cult member," the teacher said. "He'll pull you in." The cases were set to go to trial early in 1994.

*Dabblers* is the innocent-sounding term often applied to

teenagers who have become superficially enthralled with the ideology and ritual activities of satanism. Its pervasive usage is symptomatic of the hazards of plastering clichés over complex psychological phenomena in the hope of explaining them away. With its connotation of the harmless paddling of a child's fingers in water, the term *dabbler* promotes a misleadingly benign image of teenage experimentation with the forbidden fruit of the occult. In reality, such experimentation too often leads to fingers being paddled in the blood of a sacrificed animal on a makeshift altar. Sometimes, as appears to have happened in the West Memphis case, it can lead to something much worse.

In his book *Painted Black*, Dr. Carl Raschke, a professor of world religions at the University of Denver and an expert on satanism and the occult, points out that dabbling can lead to deeper immersion in violent occult practices. The individual comes to enjoy causing pain and wielding the power of life and death over helpless victims. While a troubled youth might engage in this sort of behavior without any connection with Satan-worship, the emphasis on power and dominance within the satanist philosophy, combined with the power of the ritual experience itself, can provide a degree of motivation that is too often overlooked.

In the West Memphis case, the local Crittenden County authorities had been forewarned. Librarians reported that students had been checking out books on the occult and marking the pages that contained references to human sacrifice and cannibalism. Concerned about an increase in satanic rituals and animal sacrifices in the area, officials had called in Steve Nawojczyk, a Little Rock-based expert on cults, gangs, and other nontraditional subcultures. Nawojczyk found evidence of widespread and relatively sophisticated self-styled satanic activity, including graffiti and signs of ritual activity in several abandoned buildings. Self-styled satanists, as Nawojczyk explained, are teen dabblers who have graduated to the next level but who are still essentially self-taught, absorbing their



beliefs and practices from books, movies, and music rather than formal membership in an established satanic cult.

A search of Michael Echols's home turned up an underground newsletter from a California-based group calling itself the Secret Order of the Undead, which featured themes of rape, murder, pornography, and violence. The booklet included a recipe for a homemade bomb. Another expert consulted by the local authorities, Dr. Paul King, a Memphis psychiatrist and author of *Sex, Drugs and Rock & Roll: Dealing with Today's Troubled Youth*, pointed out that self-styled satanists such as Echols gravitate to books and music that promote a philosophy of life in which evil always triumphs over good.

But the fine points of sociological analysis were lost on the distraught parents of the murdered children. "I'll chase you all the way to hell," Steven Branch, whose son was among the dead, screamed at the suspects as they were led out of the courthouse.

These and other recent examples of the volatile mixture of teens and satanism point up the danger of dismissing young adult practitioners as harmless dabblers, although admittedly not all of them go to these extremes. The concept of dabbling does, however, recognize that, as with much other teenage activity, there is an element of faddishness associated with teen involvement in satanism. While this assures that a certain percentage of teens who become fascinated with satanism during their high school years will leave it behind as they enter adulthood, it also tends to dictate that the predominant forms that teen satanism take will evolve over time. A few years ago, attention was focused on heavy-metal music. Today, the symbolism of satanism has shifted among the young to a somewhat different form of subculture, one that almost creates a longing for the defiant energy of the heavy-metal model.

Hellen Carter, a probation officer for the Maricopa County Juvenile Court in Arizona, has a lot of experience dealing

with teenagers involved in satanism. By her estimate, more than sixty-five satanic cults have been identified in the greater Phoenix area alone. The level of involvement runs the gamut from dabbling to a committed, secretive satanist lifestyle. While most of these cults are relatively harmless, Carter warns parents not to assume that their kids are just going through a phase if they become involved in satanism, but to look for the deeper, underlying problems before the phase can become an obsession. Neglecting the problem can carry a high price.

At the dabbler level Carter encounters bright but "overindulged middle-class kids," usually boys starting at about age fourteen, with above-average IQs ranging from 125 to 150 and a creative bent usually expressed in artistic and literary skills. This is the kid who doesn't make the sports team, the invisible kid with few friends who feels alienated from his classmates, his school, and his family. He is searching for something to fill that void, and if what he finds is *The Satanic Bible*, with its exaltation of rebellious indulgence, then away he goes. He finds other dabblers and together they begin to experiment with destruction rituals aimed at unpopular teachers. Maybe they get lucky and their target coincidentally meets with a mishap. Hey, this stuff works! Now they are swaggering around the halls clad head to toe in black, sporting mysterious jewelry, communicating with one another in the secret languages of the occult, and flaunting an air of menace and newfound confidence. They suddenly find themselves the center of attention, largely because they have now metamorphosed into something too weird to ignore.

All too often their experimentation takes a more ominous turn, especially when the kids involved are grappling with more serious problems. In 1990, seven members of the Legion of Doom, a communal band of West Palm Beach youths, were charged with attempted murder for beating an eighteen-year-old member who had dated outside the group. This was

a capital offense according to the rules of the legion, which exhibited what police described as "satanic overtones."

Another group that Hellen Carter encountered, the Hollywood Vampires, consisted of middle-class teens who filed their incisors to a point, sucked blood from one another, and executed forays into local blood centers. This is not an isolated example; self-mutilation and blood drinking have become as common a feature of adolescent satanic ritual as candles and chanting. Dodging the AIDS virus thus becomes an integral part of this ritualized dance of death, and it is only one of the hazards. Police all over the country recognize that kids who move on to rituals involving animal sacrifice or criminal activities, such as grave desecration, invariably get into drug and alcohol abuse as well because, as Carter puts it, "How many of you can go out into a cemetery at midnight or one o'clock and take the head off a cat and not be loaded in some way?"

Satanism has also become a factor to consider in the suicides of adolescents who have left notes explaining that they killed themselves in order to meet Satan, sometimes in the hope that the Prince of Darkness would grant them immortality as reincarnated beings commanding legions of demons. In a few cases, adolescents who have formed their own cults have threatened their parents with mass suicide if their activities were interfered with. While such threats are rarely carried out, they indicate the potential deadliness of the combination of peer-group pressure and satanic ideation.

In February 1992, columnist Jack Anderson reported that U.S. military officials had uncovered a clique of teenage Satan-worshippers at Howard Air Force Base in Panama. The teens, ranging in age from thirteen to fifteen, were students at Curundu Junior High School, which is run by the Defense Department. Most were children of military personnel stationed at the base. The other kids at the school considered them "really weird"—clad all in black, adorned with jewelry

in the form of upended crosses, they drank, smoked pot, and generally got into trouble. They also recruited, infiltrating meetings of Christian student groups in an effort to lure kids into their own cabal. Their rituals, in which they cut themselves and exchanged blood, included animal sacrifices with an exotic twist, since one of the wild animals chosen was a coati-mundi, a raccoonlike creature native to Panama. Armed with camcorders, they also conducted forays into human and pet cemeteries and videotaped themselves opening graves.

Rumors about the cult apparently circulated for weeks, but most of the noninvolved kids were afraid to talk about it, especially after hearing of the animal sacrifices and cemetery raids. Things reportedly progressed to the point where five of the cult kids formed a suicide pact during a ritual, a pact that grew to include twenty in all. Fortunately, some of the parents learned of the plan and sounded the alarm. The military authorities acknowledged only that they had learned of several teenage students of military and civilian families experimenting with cult rituals, but Anderson's sources reported that several of the teenagers were sent to psychiatric facilities, and some of the families were reassigned to other bases in the United States as a means of breaking up the ring.

For all the restless, searching adolescents who are seduced into the mysteries of satanism through their own curiosity and emotional vulnerability, there are other kids who are yanked into the sleazier regions of the occult subculture by some of its more predatory denizens—the pornographers, pimps, and drug traffickers for whom black magic is both a religion and a recruitment tool. Runaways are easy targets. One tactic favored by porn rings is to look for kids attending rock concerts and invite them to parties featuring free drugs and alcohol. A few parties down the line, sex is introduced. With one another. With small children, some of whom may be the pornographers' own kids. With animals. All of it photographed and filmed, working double duty as product and blackmail material. All of this can be carried out without the

element of satanism, but in many cases the teenage victims allege that satanic rituals were involved. This pattern of operation has been reported all over the country.

I have been aware of the problem of adults luring young teens into criminal satanic cults for years. In 1988, I was called in to help with the counseling of a fourteen-year-old girl and her family who had been forced out of their home in an upper-middle-class suburb of a major southeastern city that is a center for scientific research and military operations. The daughter had fallen into the clutches of a satanic cult and was now trying to escape. When I called a police source for advice, I was informed that I had stumbled into an ongoing investigation that traced back to similar complaints twenty years before, indicating that the cult was probably generational. Suspects included prominent people in the community as well as outsiders.

The girl in question had become involved when an older friend lured her to a ritual. She was seized, raped on the altar, and forced to participate in an animal sacrifice. Threats were made that she and her family would be harmed if she did not continue to cooperate with the cult, threats made even more terrifying through the use of tricks to convince the impressionable girl that the cultists possessed supernatural powers.

At subsequent rituals held in park areas and even churches, she was forced to participate in sexual rites and animal sacrifices. Desperate, she was hospitalized after a suicide attempt meant to protect herself and her family. The police had not been able to guarantee the family's safety, and the stunned girl was now faced with having to leave her home, school, and friends as she and her family had to relocate to another state. According to the police sources I consulted, this cult and others like it were engaged in serious criminal activity ranging from drug trafficking to pornography and prostitution to multimillion-dollar white collar crimes such as insurance scams. The police were hoping to nab the ringleaders, but it was a long process sifting through reluctant and terrified

witnesses. In addition, the cults' recruitment of teens had exacerbated the problem of teen satanism in the local schools.

My police sources repeated a theme I was to hear often in the following years: the involvement of high-level professional people—doctors, lawyers, judges, police, engineers—in satanic groups engaged in organized crime. One officer described to me how it was possible for such a cult to have an entire small community "secured," with the cultists involved in central positions. One such group kept a stable of very young girls whom they used to service visiting dignitaries—and then blackmailed them with photos and videotapes.

Another common pattern involves male "high priests" who surround themselves with young female members whom they control through sex, drugs, and the mind-control techniques that constitute the essence of black magic. A typical example of this situation came to light in 1989, when a fifteen-year-old girl from a coastal town in northern New England begged her mother to send her to a drug rehabilitation hospital, which is something kids seldom do. She had problems with grass and beer, but that was just the start. The girl had had a good relationship with her mother and a good record at school until recently, when she had begun exhibiting the typical symptoms of cult involvement: strange new friends, exhaustion, depression, bizarre occult jewelry, drawings with satanic themes. A search of her room turned up the usual literature: *The Satanic Bible*, *The Satanic Rituals*, and the *Necronomicon*. The latter is a paperback volume of ersatz ancient demonic spells that are actually based on the works of horror writer Howard Phillips Lovecraft. It is immensely popular with teenage dabblers.

Confronted by her mother with the threat of police intervention, the girl admitted that she and several of her friends had become involved in a satanic cult run by a council of five to ten "elders," who turned out to be a group of thirty-something males who had a yen for high school girls and a working

knowledge of how to use superstition and fear to control them. The "high priest" had told them that they were his slaves and convinced them that he could read their thoughts. The girls were scared to death. The fifteen-year-old said that she had been raped at knifepoint and that she and her friends had been forced to bring animals to rituals for sacrifices at local beaches.

In a disturbing number of cases these predators come from the ranks of society's appointed guardians, including police and military personnel. In 1990, two airmen from Griffiss Air Force Base in upstate New York were accused of breaking in to an abandoned building on the grounds of the Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center, a misdemeanor charge. They had broken in to the place to renovate it as a satanic temple. Word got around, and Glen Crawford, age nineteen, and James Wilcox, age twenty-two—both military police assigned to the 416th Security Squadron—were arrested and charged with criminal trespass and endangering the welfare of a child. Technically, the latter charge should be plural. The enterprising gentlemen allegedly had been providing alcohol for the teenage celebrants who flocked to their temple for parties and satanic rituals. Crawford had already been court-martialed the previous December for burglary, and Wilcox had been arrested for criminal possession of a weapon.

Apparently upstate New York is no stranger to this sort of activity. In 1989, a teenage girl from the same area told a county probation officer that she had become involved in a local satanic cult operating in Madison, Oneida, and Herkimer counties. The leaders were adults, but they were recruiting teens. They met in a secluded spot, guarded by lookouts. At first, the girl said, it was "fun and games." What spooked her was a ritual in the course of which some of the celebrants hauled in containers of blood, drew a six-pointed star known as Solomon's Seal and a magic circle on the ground, and poured the blood over it and themselves. According to the

girl, the group consisted of about twenty-five "businessmen types with big cars." One of the women who attended had a runic Nazi SS symbol tattooed on her hand.

Over the years I have talked to many relatives of teenagers involved in satanism. There was the police officer in my home state whose nephew had become obsessed with Dungeons and Dragons after flunking out of college. He had turned from that to Anton LaVey's books and was keeping a "book of shadows"—a record of his black magic rituals and meditations—which included an oath and a statement of loyalty to Satan. There was the woman in Tennessee whose sixteen-year-old grandson, a child of divorced parents who was having trouble coping with his strict father, was now on trial for the brutal murder of one of her tenants. They had found a satanic altar in the teen's bedroom closet, surmounted by an inverse cross. There were the beautiful sixteen-year-old twins who claimed to have been initiated into satanism as children in the Midwest, and who could not seem to escape from a satanic group in their new home in New England. There was the woman in Texas whose thirteen-year-old son had been running with the wrong crowd, hiding knives under his mattress, playing with fire around the house, and generally "acting out" his aggressions. He had run away from a child welfare center in fear that the teenage satanists there would harm him. He was sensitized to this particular type of threat, since he had also been dabbling with the occult in the hope that it would give him power.

Despite a steady stream of such reports, we have made discouragingly slow progress in learning how to deal with this threat to our youth. Given the links between satanism and serious criminal activity such as drug trafficking, the importance of early intervention with teenagers should be obvious. But education about the dangers of satanism and the treatment of its victims have been hampered by the unique controversies attached to the religious aspects of the problem. No one gets accused of "bigotry" for educating a child about



the dangers of drug use or drunk driving, but the First Amendment is immediately invoked amid cries of "fundamentalist hysteria" whenever someone attempts to provide a warning about the dangers presented by the powerful psychological forces employed in occult ritual.

In the late 1980s, the nationwide cult-monitoring organizations, including the American Family Foundation and the Cult Awareness Network, put together some valuable educational material on the dangers of satanism and malevolent occultism. These materials provide parents, as well as law enforcement and mental-health professionals, with a guide to help them identify when an adolescent has become involved in satanism and whether that involvement is likely to have serious consequences. These organizations, as well as the therapists and counselors who work with affected adolescents, have of necessity become familiar with the typical symptoms of teenage satanist involvement: drawing satanic graffiti, wearing jewelry and clothing with satanic and occult themes, self-mutilation or cutting, suicidal ideation, drinking their own blood or that of others, disappearing at night, obsessing about death, demonstrating an extreme and hostile aversion to mainstream religion, engaging in cruelty to animals, having problems with alcohol and drug use, dropping old friends and interests for mysterious new ones, bringing home erratic school grades, and cultivating a fascination with demons, vampires, werewolves, black magic, and the like.

By 1989, more formal efforts were under way to combat the effects of satanic ideation among teenagers. Hospitals and psychiatric facilities had begun to set aside units specifically geared to treat victims of the destructive aspects of occultism. A group of psychiatrists and psychologists at Chicago's Hartgrove Hospital created the Center for the Treatment of Ritualistic Deviance, the nation's first treatment facility for emotional and behavioral problems resulting from involvement in satanism. According to adolescent psychologist Michael Weiss, the goal of the Center was to convince occult-

obsessed youths that satanism's promises of unlimited power were unrealistic and to "make them able to function in the world so they can have a reasonable and successful life for themselves and not harm anyone else." Most of the young patients were to be admitted voluntarily, and no one would be hospitalized merely on the basis of strange or unusual beliefs.

Canadian educator Robert Tucker, who formerly headed the Council on Mind Abuse (COMA), a cult-monitoring organization in Toronto, is a specialist on dysfunctional organizations. He was also for a time head of the study group on satanism for the American Family Foundation, a Florida-based organization that researches cults. That fit nicely with his specialty, since "dabbling" teens, while frequently lone experimenters, commonly form their own small groups. These tend to be, to say the least, dysfunctional. In a paper on teens and satanism delivered at a 1989 conference given by the Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse in Ontario, Tucker elaborated on the results of some of his work with satanism-affected adolescents. He stressed that it is crucial to understand why satanism can hold such a powerful attraction for the young, because without such understanding, successful intervention is virtually impossible.

Tucker warns that the stereotyping of satanists as raving Mansonesque psychopaths is inaccurate and misleading. Alienation is such a common trait of adolescence that it sometimes seems to define those years. Many adolescents exist in a state of permanent vulnerability due to their feelings of isolation, powerlessness, self-doubt, confusion, and frustration. They are searching for answers. Sometimes they find them in what can be described as philosophical hazardous-waste dumps. One of these is satanism. Many teenagers are introduced to satanist ideas through the readily available paperback edition of Anton LaVey's manifesto, *The Satanic Bible*. The book, as Tucker observes, can be immensely appealing to them, because LaVey "advocates a kind of fierce

independence that includes anarchy, rebellion, and radical self-sufficiency . . . at a time in their lives when attitudes toward authority are being shaped."

Academic apologists for satanism are fond of noting what a "good psychologist" Anton LaVey has shown himself to be. They are right. In *The Satanic Bible* he expertly couches his arguments in language that appeals directly to adolescent sensibilities. His books are energetic diatribes, full of evocative words such as *wisdom*, *responsibility*, *vengeance*, *gratification*, *enlightenment*, and *reason*, peppered with exclamation marks and sentences spelled out in capital letters. He cleverly packages the tenets of satanism in a way that presents a clear opposition and contrast to everything an adolescent hates about conventional society and conventional religion. A teenager—or for that matter an adult who lacks the patience needed for intellectual discrimination—can interpret his arguments as examples of honest, hardheaded common sense. For most adolescents who develop an interest in satanism, *The Satanic Bible* is an inspirational work, a jumping-off point for their experimentation with black magic.

As Tucker notes, LaVey's brand of satanism emphasizes an appeal to the natural drives, especially those that apply to sexual and aggressive behavior, and encourages the kind of acting out that offends social standards of conduct. LaVey emphasizes male sexual pleasure and views females largely as "naturally passive receptors" whose pleasure lies in dressing and behaving in a seductive manner. His general message—especially to an impressionable teenager—is that any form of repression is wrong and indulgence of all desires is right. "Satan represents indulgence instead of abstinence!" and, "Satan represents all the so-called sins, as they all lead to physical, mental, or emotional gratification!" and similar examples of LaVey's bombastic prose can sound like a teenager's dream come true.

I ran into an amusing but troubling example of this a few years ago, when an informant gave me a copy of a flyer that

had been handed out by an individual in Harvard Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on Halloween night in 1989. The lone proselytizer's effort had been unexpectedly expanded when several of the kids who hang out in the part of the square known as "the pit" dashed to the nearest copy center to duplicate the thing. Harvard Square plays host to a variety of religious sects with a mission, including the Hare Krishnas and the Moonies, and at first glance the crudely printed little handout bearing the question "What is the Answer?" resembles a typical missionary flyer, which is half correct. It's a missionary flyer, all right, but it's hardly typical.

When opened, the flyer confronts the reader with the following diatribe:

Are you bored? Do you feel you're missing out on something? . . . You may be like many people. You are putting your trust in Jesus. . . . Well, my friend, with Jesus you get just one thing: The Shaft! No sex, no drugs, no Led Zeppelin. What FUN is that? But there is hope. SATAN IS THE ANSWER.

With Satan you can GET DRUNK!

With Satan you can GET WASTED!

With Satan you can GET MAD!

With Satan you can GET EVEN!

With Satan you can GET RICH!

With Satan you can GET LAID!

But isn't Satan bad and God good? Well if God is good and he made the world, then why does LIFE SUCK? . . . We owe no allegiance [s/c] to this monster God. . . . Join with Satan and KICK GOD'S ASS!

Which shall it be—a wasted life of sacrifice, self-denial, subservience, and subjugation to God, or a life of indulgence, self-fulfillment, independence and alliance with Satan?

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.

The anonymous rant does not stop with exhorting its readers to, as it were, come to the altar of Satan and be saved—it urges criminal activity: "Find a church where the bible is taught as the complete word of God and is the final authority, and burn it down." Fortunately for the Cambridge fire department, none of the author's readers appears to have taken him up on it.

It may come as a surprise to learn that many adolescents are drawn to satanism specifically because of moral considerations. Tucker and other counselors report that teenagers frequently claim that disgust with the "hypocrisy" of conventional religion, especially Christianity, was a major factor in their decision to embrace satanism. They are outraged over the antics of corrupt televangelists, the molestation of children by priests, the inability of churches to deal with poverty and warfare, and the battles over social issues such as birth control, homosexuality, and abortion. Meanwhile, the popular culture glorifies sex and violence, encourages the immediate gratification of every desire, and worships power and success of any kind, acquired by any means. To adolescents, it can seem as if evil is that which succeeds.

Of course, adolescents need not confine their search for answers to religious sources. There is the entire universe of secular philosophy as well—although many of the answers they find in most philosophic systems probably won't make much sense either. But there is one thing that a religious system can provide that a secular philosophy cannot: the compelling, seductive emotional power of the religious conversion. A relatively high percentage of today's adolescents believe in paranormal experiences. Rob Tucker notes that many of the teens he works with are fascinated with the concept of occult powers and paranormal experiences. Visions and hallucinations are often experienced in trance states, especially those induced or enhanced by drugs, alcohol, or group hysteria. While such effects can be obtained through other avenues, if adolescents experience them in association

with satanic imagery and ideals, these experiences help to validate satanism and make their rituals feel authentic and powerful. Satanism also offers adolescents the excitement of gaining knowledge about occult mysteries that frighten and intimidate others, and the illusion of power over supernatural forces and entities.

Tucker spoke with children and teenagers who claimed they actually saw discarnate entities, heard disembodied voices, saw visions, and communed with spiritual satanic agents. While he believes that these are the result of manipulation, false perception, or just plain nonsense, he recognizes that the experiences are very real to those who have them. Thus, they can form a "pool of experience" influencing subsequent conduct and behavior. This phenomenon is akin to the "born again" quality of the emotional experience that accompanies sudden conversions to Christianity and other religions.

An even darker facet of this area of psychological influence is what Tucker calls the "thrill high," an experience of euphoria that occurs during some satanic ceremonies that involve systematic torturing and killing of animals. It is experienced as a powerful urge to harm. What Tucker finds particularly disturbing is that this phenomenon is not sufficiently explained by preexisting psychological problems, bad family environments, genetic defects, or brain chemistry. It appears to him that virtually anyone may be able to experience this thrill given the right conditioning, and that "some teens drawn deeply into satanism appear to actually *learn* this kind of 'pleasure,' may come to crave it and to seek even greater thrills through ever more violent and destructive acts."

The satanically involved adolescent is often solitary, but should several of them get together and form a cult, they derive the added benefit of a sense of belonging and acceptance, and the kid who assumes the leadership role gets an extra charge out of controlling the rest. The rituals give them a chance to freely act out their impulses and aggressions,

and the anticonscience message of satanism is subsequently reinforced by the accompanying peer pressure. In this setting they can, as we have seen, become extremely dangerous to themselves and others. Lacking a firm, positive sense of self, they can easily cross the line between fantasy and reality and develop a new core identity as a satanist, feeling that the faith answers all their needs.

One of Tucker's experiences with this type involved a fourteen-year-old he calls Jonathan, who was a ward of the Children's Aid Society in Canada. The boy had a history of neglect and abuse by his alcoholic mother, who had been abandoned by his father when he was two. He performed poorly in school, got into fights, and eventually was sent to a psychiatric group home for assessment. But Jonathan had had a revelation. He had discovered heavy-metal music. Its themes of violence and aggression were reflected in the symbols and imagery he drew, wrote about, and wore. The satanic images were his favorite, and he covered his school notebooks with inverted crosses and pentagrams. He toted a copy of *The Satanic Bible* with him and talked incessantly about satanist philosophy. He acquired the paraphernalia of satanic worship—black candles, ritual knives, a chalice—and could be heard chanting in his room late at night.

At first the staff of the group home didn't pay much attention to Jonathan's antics. Just one more kid making a satanic fashion statement. But then matters took an alarming turn. The incidents of violence soon began to increase, and during these outbursts Jonathan seemed completely out of control. He boasted that he was possessed, that he had welcomed into his body a demonic entity who gave him special powers to defeat his enemies. He had taken the demon's name as his own. The staff treated him like a walking time bomb and he played it for all it was worth, reveling in the fear and confusion he caused. At this point Tucker was called in.

Tucker finds that this "Profile One" type of adolescent satanist is the more difficult of the two types to work with

because these kids tend to identify themselves with satanism at a very fundamental level. A therapy session with an intelligent adolescent satanist can become an astonishing foray into sophisticated discussions of metaphysics—with the kid making it clear that he considers the counselor a fool who knows nothing of true reality. These kids are often extremely knowledgeable about satanism and the occult and will quickly write off any adult whose familiarity with these subjects falls significantly short of their own. Moreover, if they have had paranormal experiences or felt a "thrill high" through their destructive actions, they will be even more wedded to their satanist beliefs.

Most counselors advocate doing everything possible to separate the adolescent from any satanic group he or she may have become involved with. Cults can provide a very powerful bonding mechanism for these adolescents, providing them with a surrogate family and a sense of control and identity. If the teen is in fear of a criminal group that has its hooks in his life, police protection may be essential to successful intervention, to say nothing of physical safety. Most counselors also advocate removing as many as possible of the satanic symbols, ritual implements, drawings, writings, clothing, and other paraphernalia, in order to stop further reinforcement of the adolescent's beliefs.

However, perhaps the biggest barrier to successful intervention with such adolescents is the message of satanism itself. The therapeutic tools that can be used to help pull people out of satanism are the very things that satanism teaches people to shun. The core message of satanism is designed to destroy the human capacity for love, warmth, trust, and adherence to any moral code, leaving the individual desensitized and out of touch with reality. The problem for the therapist or cult worker trying to bring that person back is to create some new basis for bonding to replace the bond with Satan—and that, Tucker suggests, is the big dilemma. To create a new bond requires qualities that the satanic ideol-



ogy has systematically destroyed. This may make it impossible to break through the satanic wall the adolescent has created around himself.

Fortunately, the type of adolescent Tucker designates as Profile Two is easier to work with. These are the "normal," better-adjusted kids who are more attracted to the intellectual pretensions of the satanic philosophy, who confound the apologists' smug contention that only "unstable" or "disturbed" adolescents "act out" the violence and destructive themes of satanism. These youngsters tend to be popular, bright, and curious products of stable, supportive home backgrounds. They are also concerned with the meaning and purpose of life, and find satanism's condemnation of hypocrisy appealing. The danger is that once they are drawn in by this appeal, they may buy the rest of the satanic ideals of power and aggression.

One such adolescent Tucker worked with was fifteen-year-old "Andrea." She did well in school, had many good friends, and was on the student council. She seemed happy and had a good relationship with her parents. But once she became intrigued with satanism, her life suddenly changed. She began to dress only in black and wore charms and jewelry with satanic symbols. She dropped her friends and stopped participating in family activities. Images of horror, killing, and suicide so fascinated her that she covered her bedroom walls and her school notebooks with them, and she moved through her own bleak world with the cold detachment of an automaton. At times, her parents and friends felt as if she had mentally and emotionally drifted away from her body, leaving behind an empty shell.

Things came to a head for Andrea one night when she had a "vision" and a voice told her she would have to kill her teacher to gain the higher state of consciousness that would confer supernatural powers upon her. Unfortunately, she acted on it. She took a knife to school and tried to assault her teacher. Having failed, she ran home and tried to commit

suicide by drinking duplicator fluid. Fortunately, this did not work, and when the police arrived she was taken into custody and put in the hospital. It was there that Rob Tucker met her. Fortunately, he was able to assist in a successful intervention and to help Andrea get her life back on track.

In his view, there is more hope for Profile Two adolescents such as Andrea because of their core identity and stronger sense of self. Usually there is a supportive family waiting in the wings. Although they may end up in the same depersonalized state as the Profile One kids, and may even engage in criminal activities, it is generally less difficult to break through their bonding to the image of Satan or to a satanic group. Also, since the Profile Twos are frequently drawn to satanism as part of their search for personal and religious meaning, therapists or counselors who intervene can often help them to sort out what it is they are really seeking and to show them other routes to that goal. But for this to happen it is necessary for mental-health professionals to be aware that satanism is a potential health and safety hazard for adolescents in the same way, and potentially to the same degree, as are drugs, alcohol, unprotected sex, and all the other dangers we routinely mount programs to warn kids and parents about.

Catherine Mahaffey is a counselor and private investigator from Arizona who deals extensively with cases involving adolescent satanism. "We teach them about stranger danger, we teach them don't drink and drive, we teach them about drugs and safe sex, but we don't teach them about satanism," she declares indignantly. If the adolescent embraces the satanist belief system as a religion, questions are raised about whether anyone has the right to interfere. Many counselors, Mahaffey among them, have complained to me that teachers, police, and therapists are extremely reluctant to engage in educational programs about satanism and malevolent occultism for this reason. And thus through our reluctance to confront what satanism's proponents and apologists claim is purely a "religious" issue, we leave ourselves, our children,

our mental-health professionals, our clergy, and our law enforcement personnel inadequately prepared to deal with it.

"Exit counselors," who specialize in voluntary counseling for cult-involved individuals and their families, often find themselves on the front lines of the war against satanic cult recruitment. Kevin Garvey is an exit counselor from southern New England. For more than fifteen years he has helped to talk people out of cults all over the United States. What he does used to be called deprogramming, back in the days when frantic parents hired people with vans to snatch their kids off street corners where they were peddling roses for Sun Myung Moon. But Garvey does not employ those tactics. At nearly six feet six, he looms over most of his clients, but it is not physical intimidation that he uses to reclaim minds kidnapped by destructive cults. Instead, Garvey, who studied religion and philosophy at Columbia University, uses the power of, reason to win his clients' trust and respect as he works to free their minds.

Garvey specializes in cults that are related to the New Age movement, and this sometimes brings him into contact with victims of various forms of satanism and malevolent occultism. Through these encounters, he has acquired a working knowledge of the long-range effects of adolescent involvement in satanism and how it fits in to the adult criminal world of drug trafficking, prostitution, and pornography, as well as its growing place in the neo-Nazi subculture.

In the 1980s, Garvey counseled teenage and young adult satanist practitioners from northern New England to the mid-Atlantic region around Delaware, Virginia, and southern Pennsylvania. One characteristic of these victims that stood out to him, and to other counselors with whom he compared notes, was an extreme apathy toward their own lives and human existence in general. So pervasive was this lack of feeling that its victims resorted to cutting and slashing themselves in order to feel something. One young woman told Garvey that she literally felt nothing, that she had slashed her

wrists because she needed to "see the blood in order to feel the sensation [of pain] and in order to feel the psychological response to what she had done."

In Garvey's view, the extreme boredom he sees in this generation of teens and young adults is a primary cause of their attraction to satanist practices. They may "get into" satanism in order to fill the void in their lives, but the void is instead cultivated and refined by the dynamics of the cult group. The primitive but effective psychological-conditioning techniques at work in these groups intensify the kids' moral pessimism. "They don't have anything that they find useful in life," Garvey observes. "They don't see anything that would be innately gratifying in regard to life itself, just being here on the earth." The nihilistic philosophic creed that most of these groups borrow from the writings of Anton LaVey and Aleister Crowley gives them what they believe is a moral authorization to cultivate an essentially stagnant mental and emotional state.

What Garvey and other counselors are finding among these teens is not so much a rebellion as a protective recoiling into nihilism and a preoccupation with the bizarre and macabre as a means of injecting some form of excitement into their bleak young lives. In this world, pain becomes a positive value and in extreme cases a sacrament—whether inflicted upon oneself or upon others. Garvey observed that teenage members of several satanism-oriented groups that practiced torture and sacrifice of animals at the same time ritually constricted and distorted sexual activity into an expression of self-loathing. They treated sex as an alien force to be ritualized and controlled in order to ward off any life-enhancing effects of normal, exuberant youthful sexuality.

When pain is inflicted in a ritual setting, the most helpless victims are usually first in line. For kids involved in satanism, animal torture and sacrifice more or less comes with the territory. Formal cult affiliation is not required. "It's idiot juveniles and young adults who decide to celebrate Halloween

with a good brouhaha who do this," says Treva Slote of the Arizona ASPCA, speaking of the increase in all-black and all-white cats and dogs kidnapped for use in sacrificial rituals around Halloween. Pet owners in many areas are advised to keep an eye on their cats and dogs, lest they be snatched and killed in a variety of gruesome ways.

In 1989, residents of several towns in Orange County, California, began to find the mutilated bodies of pet cats neatly arranged on their front lawns. A report prepared for the Tustin City Council by the acting chief of police acknowledged that the police were aware of "some cat killing in the . . . area being committed by the human hand," specifically by certain members of local gangs and neo-Nazi skinhead packs who had developed an interest in satanism. "It looks like ten to fifteen cats were killed for skinhead fun and games or used in ritual or satanic worship," the report concluded.

However, the Orange County Sheriffs Department, fearful of "public panic or hysteria," decided to blame the whole thing on coyotes that had been spotted in the area. Since many of the deceased animals in question had been found neatly severed in half, with their guts, paws, and heads arranged in geometric patterns, or nailed to crosses, or otherwise bearing evidence of ritual intent, it can only be concluded that Orange County hosts an unusually talented breed of coyote.

Tired of the coyote party line, Tustin resident Janet Hampson organized a citizens' patrol and took it upon herself to collect dozens of dead cats, which she turned over to local veterinarians for analysis. Their unanimous opinion was that the animals had been killed by humans. Hampson also prepared a highly professional three-hundred-page report on the investigation. Based on her efforts, the Orange County Board of Supervisors asked the sheriff's department to reopen the case.

Given the fact that participating in the torture of animals is now generally regarded as an early warning sign that a young person is headed for even more serious behavioral problems,

it is inexplicable that so many law enforcement agencies adamantly refuse to take this activity seriously. Fortunately, this is not a universal reaction, and animal-welfare organizations do seem to be growing more aware of and concerned about the problem, in some cases even sponsoring workshops and seminars on the subject.

In the course of one case involving animal sacrifice, Kevin Garvey counseled a girl of about seventeen who had joined a group of fifteen- to Seventeen-year olds led by a minister's daughter in a small town in an eastern state. The cult included both male and female members, but the young women tended to dominate. Members were required to bring to meetings small wild animals or pets, which would then be tortured and sacrificed. The purpose was the invocation of incantatory power that the teenage celebrants believed would draw them closer to the power of nature itself.

The young woman demonstrated such an intense commitment to the beliefs and practices of that group's mixture of satanism, black witchcraft, and other occult influences that her alarmed mother called on Garvey to evaluate the situation. When he arrived at their home, he asked to see the girl's bedroom. "Her room was a chapel," Garvey recalls. "She had an altar. She had candles. . . . She had pentagrams that she had written on her wall. The whole room had been painted black." Other striking features included several hangman's nooses suspended from the ceiling and a number of effigy dolls scattered about. On her person the girl wore an eclectic collection of occult pendants and talismans, including a "mojo bag" containing parts of a dead lizard and some "vegetation." How much of this paraphernalia was flaunted as an "occult fashion statement," in the same spirit as the crosses that adorn the ears of many teens, and how much represented religious belief is open to question. The young woman was resistant to discussion, but in the context of the intensity of her involvement these objects are likely to have held genuine meaning for her, which she apparently intended to pursue

after she left high school. She was seriously considering enrolling in a local liberal arts college believed to harbor a satanic cult that included members of the faculty and student body. Garvey confirmed this information through consultation with a local psychologist who had also treated young adults caught up in satanism.

The danger that these youths will be led into violent or illegal activities is always present. Garvey reports that 20 percent of the counselings he has conducted over the past few years involved cults that were engaged in serious crimes. He recalls a teenage boy who belonged to an alienated group of youths that practiced an assortment of home-brewed satanic rituals. Several of these teens were runaways from the Midwest who supported themselves through drug trafficking and prostitution, working as coast-to-coast couriers for shipments of LSD, marijuana, and so-called designer drugs. The group was shepherded by a vociferous satanist priest who pimped teenage girls to upscale married couples looking for sexual adventures. Through this arrangement he had built up a stable of character witnesses he could blackmail into providing cover for him should he get into trouble with the law.

Another of Garvey's counseling cases vividly illustrates the extremes to which teenage involvement in the criminal side of satanism can go. He was called in by the family of a fifteen-year-old boy who had become entangled with a family of cocaine-smuggling intergenerational satanists. The counseling, which ultimately succeeded in freeing the boy from the cult, extended over a period of several days. During that time, Garvey and his counseling team were threatened with violence by the cult's roughly two-hundred-member paramilitary enforcement unit, whose existence was verified by local police. Garvey learned that the gang used teenagers as prostitutes and drug couriers and conducted indoctrination sessions in satanist philosophy at the leader's house.

The extreme youth of some of the children who become involved with satanism is reflected in Garvey's case that in-

volved a thirteen-year-old boy from a mid-Atlantic state who had shot another youth in the stomach. Fortunately, the second child was expected to recover, and his assailant had been ordered to undergo psychiatric observation in a local hospital. It turned out that he and some other boys had been playing with a loaded gun when the victim approached the group and made some insulting comments about the thirteen-year-old's well-known affinity for occult practices. As Garvey recounts, the youth "reflexively raised the gun and pulled the trigger twice," firing two .38 slugs into the other boy. Upon his arrest, his family informed the police that he had become involved with some kind of "witchcraft" cult. Angry and shaken, the youth asserted that his religion had been insulted.

Garvey was called in to consult with the forensic psychiatrist on the case. He discovered that the boy had been drawn to the occult since the age of ten, and by age eleven had fallen under the influence of an older teenage girl who was a priestess in a local group that claimed to practice witchcraft. She had apparently proceeded to instruct him in a combination of nature worship and satanism, and had sexually initiated him as well. The boy's readings had progressed from *The Satanic Bible* to more advanced occult literature, and he had accumulated a collection of ritual paraphernalia and an extensive list of individuals who shared his interests. Garvey observed that the boy's drawings and writings indicated a more sophisticated understanding of contemporary satanism than might be expected in one so young. But what terrified his eleven-year-old sister was the dark side of his personality that emerged when he chanted in his room late at night.

Garvey's encounters with satanists who prey on teenagers has taken him from the hills of West Virginia to the streets of Hollywood. His confrontation with Tinseltown's satanist subculture occurred in 1989 when he took on the case of a beautiful young woman we'll call Gloria. She had been lured into prostitution through a modeling agency that employed her during her first year of college in Los Angeles. According



to Garvey, she "wound up working within a prostitution circle that specialized in the top-of-the-shelf customer, the movie people, well-known professional athletes, politicians, actors." She also wound up on drugs. "Her madam . . . was in contact with a major cocaine distributor, a 'coke for the stars' type thing," says Garvey. "They dealt with the Hollywood set, so they were dealing with big numbers."

Gloria's madam, hoping to make her and the other girls more deployable and amenable, had sent them to one of the better-known motivational training courses. Garvey has long been concerned that the hypnotic influences generated by such "trainings" open people up to infusions of increasingly potent and profound occult concepts and practices. He believes that Gloria's experience with the training she attended increased her psychological vulnerability.

By this time, Gloria was also taking Ecstasy and crystal methamphetamine—Ice—two very powerful drugs that, according to Garvey, render the user extremely suggestible. In Gloria's case, they helped to set her up for an encounter with the occult. She had been befriended by "Selene," another young prostitute. Selene was into satanism. According to Garvey, she and some friends seduced Gloria into a highly secretive, prolonged ritual that involved the "cleansing and purification" of Gloria's apartment, psychically and with herbs, and simultaneously the "cleansing" of Gloria herself. She was put on drugs, given a purgative to clear out her digestive tract, then immersed in a special bath of herbs and "sanctified" water. But at a crucial point the ritual was taken over by an older, male friend of Selene's, whose very presence terrified Gloria. Garvey reports: "I was informed by the young woman that this man had had sexual intercourse with her, sort of forced himself upon her. But it wasn't a lusty-type thing, it was more a ritual thing. . . . She was in a bathtub going through some sort of cleansing and he was in the apartment with her. He was dressed in bizarre clothes, doing some sort of ritualistic chanting or incantation when

she, to use the vernacular, freaked out. She went into a psychotic phase dominated by pure terror."

High on drugs that had left her susceptible to paranoid delusions, Gloria leaped from the tub, threw on some clothes, and ran out into the night. Fortunately, she went to the police for help and was taken to a hospital for diagnosis. Her mind in chaos, out of control and incoherent, she managed to break out of the hospital, take a cab to the airport, and fly to her mother's home. Arriving on the doorstep still in a state of terror, she stormed into the house muttering, "They're coming after me, they're going to kill us, gotta watch out," and made her mother pull down all the blinds and close the drapes.

Once she was able to make it clear to her mother what she was caught up in, Garvey was called in. In the end, he concluded that the core of what Gloria was talking about fit a pattern that many exit counselors have heard about or encountered. But this was the first time that he had dealt with someone who had clearly been so directly involved, and so nearly destroyed by her involvement, in something with this type of occultic overtones.

After counseling Gloria for a couple of days, Garvey called some of his police contacts in an effort to corroborate the information he had accumulated. Through a source in the Los Angeles Police Department he verified that the older male Gloria had referred to was a well-known satanist high priest from the Los Angeles area. Garvey suspects that the man was "purifying" Gloria as part of a process to cleanse her to be a "proper vessel" for either a sexual ritual or a sacrifice. Although she eluded the satanist's intentions, Gloria is still a very damaged young woman, struggling to escape her old world of drugs, occultism, and prostitution. Her behavior remains erratic. She has joined the ranks of the youthful walking wounded whose lives have been torn apart by their encounters with satanism.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Satanic Ritual Child Abuse

The parents were bewildered at first. One mother recalled how excited her daughter had been about her first day of school at the Gallup Christian Day Care Center in Roseburg, Oregon. Cowboy Chip's School, the kids called it. Chip was the adult son of Ed and Mary Lou Gallup, the Nazarene minister and his wife who had operated child care centers in Roseburg since 1961. Chip had opened his own facility in 1980. To the people of Roseburg, the Gallups were pillars of the community.

The parents do not appear "hysterical" as they speak of what was done to their children at the Gallups' schools. They are calm and rational, but their eyes are sad. They have the slightly stunned look of people who have been confronted with an evil they never expected to encounter, indeed could hardly have known existed, and who are now exhausted from years of dealing with its impact on their lives. The mother of the little girl who was so enthused about her new school remembers how the child had to be dragged from the car into the school building the next morning. She recalls how her daughter took to changing her panties every time she went to the bathroom, her story echoing that of a young couple who

remember their own daughter's nightmares, bedwetting, and constant changes of underwear.

The children had also been "acting out" in a sexual manner far beyond their years. A five-year-old girl had taken up French-kissing; she said she had learned it at school. The kids talked about urine and feces all the time—bizarre, obsessive, fearful talk. They talked about a lot of strange things, when they were awake. Most days, they would doze off in the backseat of the car on the way home from school and then sleep for ten, twelve hours straight, as if they had been drugged.

In December 1987, Chip Gallup was brought to trial for sexual abuse of the children in his day care facility. He hired the best criminal defense attorney in Oregon. Four children testified against Chip. The best criminal defense attorney in Oregon went after the children's parents. They were the culprits, he said. They had put words in their children's mouths. These charges were all the result of "hysteria." He brought in an expert witness for the defense, Dr. Lee Coleman, a psychiatrist who had previously been paid handsomely for testifying that "the real child abusers" are the law enforcement and mental-health professionals who interview these youngest victims of sexual assault. There was "no shred of evidence" that the abuse had taken place, Coleman declared. The kids had been "trained" to believe that these horrible things had happened. They had been fed "leading questions" by "police, therapists, and other kinds of people."

But the parents recalled how Detective Mark Ranger, of the Oregon State Police, had drilled it into their heads that they were not to ask those "leading" questions. "I was being careful not to lead my child and just asked him how was school and what did he do that day, and he started to shake and cry," one mother remembered. "Then he said, 'I'm scared, Mom. There are some bad things happening at our school.' " Another mother had been skeptical at first, but had assured her daughter that she would be allowed to stay home

from school, just to be on the safe side. It was only then that the little girl broke down. "It's a bad school, Mom," she sobbed. Then she told her mother how and where Chip had touched her. Across town, another child was telling her mother about how Chip had "licked me down there." Chip was handy with a video camera and had made movies of the games he played with the children. Then he forced them to watch the tapes. As is so often the case, the investigators were unable to recover any such tapes.

But there was more to the abuse than sexual molestation and homemade child pornography. There was blood and death. Chip killed lots of animals in front of the kids, to let them know what would happen to them and their parents if they talked. The abusers made the kids drink the blood. They threatened to put them in freezers. They threatened to burn down their houses.

The Gallups spent a lot of time putting fear into those kids, but it wasn't the fear of God. One of their favorite games involved making little crosses out of toothpicks. "They would hold them right side up and say, 'Who are we worshiping today? Jesus!' then reverse them—hold them as the inverse satanic cross—and say, 'Who are we worshiping today? Satan!' Then turn them back and forth," one of the mothers was told. One girl was terrified that she would not go to heaven. Her mother tried to reassure her that God would forgive her for whatever she had been forced to do. "Even if you've killed a person?" the child asked plaintively.

The district attorney who prosecuted the case was William Lasswell, now a judge. On New Year's Eve 1987, his work paid off: The jury came back with a guilty verdict on three of the four charges. Now that they had established credibility by convicting Chip, Lasswell and his team went after Ed and Mary Lou, based on the testimony of a five-year-old boy. The jury found them guilty as well. (Mary Lou's conviction was later overturned on a technicality.)

The first reports of ritual abuse in day care centers surfaced

around 1984, and the therapeutic community has been struggling with the issues surrounding this most bizarre form of child abuse ever since. Therapists who work with young victims have compiled extensive lists of symptoms typical of a child who has been subjected to ritual abuse. They have become familiar with, if never quite accustomed to, the nightmarish quality of the children's allegations. Yet, these stories were not entirely unfamiliar. Clinicians treating patients with dissociative disorders had heard some of these patients, mostly women, tell of ritual abuse for years. But mental-health professionals were apt to dismiss their tales of seemingly unbelievable horror as symptoms of psychosis, schizophrenia, fantasy, or malingering. The accounts of abuse in day care centers brought a new sense of immediacy to the problem, especially since the stories these children were telling often closely paralleled the disclosures therapists had been hearing from their adult patients.

At first, these cases appeared to be isolated aberrations. But more recent studies geared toward determining what percentage of child abuse can be classified as ritual abuse have resulted in disturbing findings indicating that the incidence of ritual abuse is much higher than previously thought. Researchers such as University of New Hampshire sociologist David Finkelhor, who has studied child abuse for over a decade, have found that anywhere from 19 percent to 59 percent of females and 9 percent of males have as children had sexual contact of some kind with adults. A key 1988 study by Finkelhor showed that about thirteen percent of cases of sexual abuse at child care centers also involved some form of ritual abuse. Significantly, 66 percent of the cases of sexual abuse involving multiple perpetrators were also classified as ritual abuse cases. Almost none of the single-perpetrator cases fell into this category.

Researchers have also shown that children who were subjected to ritual abuse were abused in a greater variety of ways than those who were exposed to simple sexual abuse. A

1988 study by Susan Kelley, an assistant professor in the Maternal Child Health Graduate Program at the Boston College School of Nursing who has done extensive studies on ritually abused children, found that children who had been ritually abused at a day care center were significantly more likely to report having been drugged, subjected to physical restraints, threatened with death or dismemberment, and forced to participate in sexual activities with other children. They were far more likely to have undergone bizarre physical and psychological torture, such as being locked in cages, "buried alive" in coffins, subjected to staged "drownings" by being held under water and "rescued" at the last minute, or tied upside down to crosses.

Kelley's findings also indicated that the impact of satanic ritual abuse was noticeably more severe than that of simple sexual abuse. Children subjected to such abuse were "considered at risk for severe psychiatric problems," especially dissociative disorders. Their symptoms also tended to persist for longer periods of time; Kelley found that 80 percent of the children in her sample still experienced fears related to ritual abuse more than two years after it occurred. Most of these children had not only been fondled but had been subjected to some form of vaginal, anal, or oral intercourse, and reports that such activities had been undertaken for the production of pornography were frequent. In addition, these children had been subjected to especially severe forms of physical and emotional abuse as part of a deliberate campaign of terror by the perpetrators.

Not surprisingly, the ritually abused children also demonstrated more behavior problems, more aggressive, antisocial, and out-of-control acting out, according to Kelley. Some of the traumatic aftereffects associated with ritual sexual abuse include increased fear, anxiety, anger, and hostility, decreased self-esteem, acting out by engaging in inappropriate sexual behaviors, as well as preoccupation with the devil, magic, ghosts, and the alleged supernatural powers of their

abusers. The most extreme results were seen in children who had been ritually abused by members of their own families, particularly by their parents. Psychologists have found that the closer the relationship between the child and the abuser, the greater the emotional impact.

The pattern of terrorization engaged in by ritual abusers serves a purpose beyond that of the sadistic satisfaction of the perpetrators: It helps to ensure the silence of the victims. As devastating as an encounter with the netherworld of satanism can be for an adult, it is symptomatic of the essential cowardice of criminal practitioners of satanic and sadistic ritual abuse that their worst outrages are reserved for their most defenseless victims—children, the younger the better, preferably the ones too young to form words to give their terror a reality that adults can hear; the ones too young to be believed, even when they do attempt to speak about what has been done to them.

"It's been said that if you wanted to carry out a bizarre crime for the sake of power and terror, that you would do things that the victim could report that nobody would possibly believe," says psychiatrist Roland Summit of Harbor/UCLA Medical Center, who has treated many cases of childhood sexual abuse. Cult leaders are well acquainted with this tactic. The Reverend Jim Jones, who led more than nine hundred persons—over two hundred children among them—to their deaths, was once quoted as saying that he wasn't worried about being found out because what he was doing was so bizarre that no one would believe it. (Jones himself employed something called the Black Light Discipline Room, with huge drawings of skeletons and monsters on the wall, to terrify People's Temple children into obedience.)

Summit is also concerned about what he says is a misplaced reliance on the criminal justice system to "prove" that ritual abuse happens by obtaining convictions in court trials. This arena makes for an uneven contest, Summit says, because a three-year-old witness cannot possibly compete with an adult



in the art of concocting alibis. Yet, a jury must be able to convict on the basis of evidence that leaves no room for reasonable doubt. However, Summit cautions, in evaluating the probability that this devastating form of child abuse actually exists, the public "should not measure these things according to whether they will put someone in jail, but rather whether or not there's sufficient circumstantial evidence and consistent information to make us concerned [about the welfare of the children]."

Summit believes that the key reason for all the skepticism in this area is the concerted effort by adults to deny the problem, not just in the courtroom but in a more general sense. He gives several reasons for this widespread denial. Public recognition of the reality of child sexual exploitation undermines the comfortable belief that we live in a happy, just, and fair society. It casts suspicion on trusted institutions such as churches, schools, and the courts. Adults whose childhoods did not include abuse tend to be incredulous and consequently have difficulty identifying with victims; adults who were themselves victims are uncomfortably reminded of their own abuse. The latter recoil at reminders of traumas they may not even consciously remember. Both find the very mention of such crimes embarrassing and resist having to deal with it at all. Then there are those who harbor a secret fondness for child pornography and are afraid that more vigorous prosecution of pedophiles will restrict their access to this guilty pleasure. Such adults prefer to blame the victims and their defenders.

The resulting "shoot-the-messenger response" has become focused on the law enforcement and mental-health specialists who interview suspected victims of child abuse. Defense attorneys, accused parents, skeptics, and advocates of pedophilia alike have charged these social workers and therapists with coaching young and impressionable witnesses. Because these professionals must provide an assurance of safety and a supportive environment for a terrorized child to begin to

disclose ritual abuse, they are chronically vulnerable to such attacks. In the case of adult survivors of ritual abuse, suppressed memories of the traumatic events of their childhoods frequently do not surface until later in life, thus making these survivors vulnerable to accusations that the memories are fabricated.

The False Memory Syndrome Foundation was founded in 1992 by Pamela and Peter Freyd. Its stated purpose is to seek reasons for the spread of what they see as false memories of incest and sexual abuse, dismissing these as the fantastic products of hypnosis conducted by overeager therapists. Claiming to represent thousands of "falsely accused" family members, the FMSF has waged an aggressive campaign that has significantly impacted the most vulnerable area of child sexual exploitation—satanic ritual abuse.

The Freyds' interest in the subject is personal. In 1993, their daughter, Professor Jennifer Freyd of the Department of Psychology at the University of Oregon, claimed that she had been a victim of incest at the hands of her father. (Peter Freyd denies her claim and says that he passed a lie detector test to prove his innocence.) Another blow to the organization fell the same year when it was learned that FMSF advisory board member Dr. Ralph Underwager and his wife, Hollinda Wakefield, had in 1991 been interviewed by a Netherlands-based publication entitled *Paidika: The Journal of Paedophilia*.

Underwager has an impressive set of credentials, including a master of divinity degree and membership in organizations such as the American Psychological Association, the National Council for Children's Rights, and the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex. He was one of the founders of VOCAL—Victims of Child Abuse Laws, an organization that includes convicted child molesters among its members—and he has frequently appeared as a well-paid expert witness for the defense in child sexual abuse cases. He contends that children are natural liars and that investigators and therapists are the real child abusers, subjecting children to the equivalent of

North Korean-style brainwashing tactics. When investigative reporter Civia Tamarkin asked Underwager his basis for this contention, his on-the-record reply was that "children have been turning on their parents since Absalom."

In the *Paidika* interview, which appeared in the fall-winter 1993 issue, Underwager and Wakefield characterized pedophilia as a "responsible" choice of sexual expression. Pedophiles should stop accepting negative definitions from outsiders, Underwager declared, and should instead assert that their chosen "pursuit of intimacy" is part of God's plan for man's "absolute freedom" and is an "expression of God's will that there be closeness and intimacy, unity of flesh, between people." Apparently unable to formulate an excuse for this embarrassment, the FMSF accepted Underwager's resignation. Wakefield remains on the FMSF Advisory Board.

Fortunately, a growing number of mental-health professionals and those in law enforcement do recognize the reality of ritual abuse. The Ritual Abuse Task Force of the Los Angeles County Commission for Women takes allegations of this particularly savage form of violence against women and children very seriously indeed. The task force defines ritual abuse as "a brutal form of abuse of children, adolescents, and adults, consisting of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, and involving the use of rituals." It does not stipulate that these rituals must necessarily be satanic in nature, although it is noted that many adult survivors "state that they were ritually abused as part of satanic worship for the purpose of indoctrination into satanic beliefs and practices." Ritual abuse is not a one-shot deal, but "usually involves repeated abuse over an extended period of time." Its purpose is the complete control and domination of the victims. The trauma induced causes severe and longstanding emotional damage to very young children, establishing patterns of traumatic response that render the children vulnerable to indoctrination into the belief system of the perpetrators.

Dr. Catherine Gould of California, a member of the task force, is a pioneer in the therapeutic treatment of ritual abuse victims, a field that did not even exist prior to the mid-1980s. The first children she and other therapists encountered did not come into their offices talking about satanic ritual abuse, because they had been terrorized into silence. That silence was eventually broken not through words but in the course of play therapy in the reassuring presence of the therapist.

It is the symptomology of fear that the therapist detects first, Gould says. The children live in terror that "the bad people from the bad school will come and get them, kidnap them, burn their house down, kill their parents." In case after case, these same threats are repeated over and over. Early on, Gould realized that these children were significantly more traumatized, more severely abused, than those whom most therapists encounter in their practices. These kids needed a tremendous amount of reassurance before they began to talk. One of the most difficult aspects of these cases, Gould says, "is the fact that we're finding that you can abuse one hundred children ritualistically with all the overlay of terror and brain-washing that's been discussed, and pretty much one hundred children will keep the secret of the abuse until there's some kind of intervention." The victims of ritual abuse most often initially communicate their distress in the form of physical and emotional symptoms. (Interestingly, many therapists have noted a correlation between physical symptoms in children complaining of ritual abuse and the physical scars of old wounds displayed by adult patients who report having been ritually abused as children.)

When she first began to work in this area, Gould compiled an extensive list of symptoms she and other therapists had encountered in working with children who disclosed ritual abuse. Some children did show physical symptoms of sexual abuse, such as rectal and vaginal tears and the presence of sexually transmitted disease. Chronic exhaustion or nausea was apparent in others. Children's bodies sometimes showed

highly unusual patterns of bruises or cuts. But in most cases it was the behavioral anomalies that gave the first indications that something was seriously wrong.

All children go through a phase when they are preoccupied with their bodily functions, but the ritually abused children took it to the point of obsession. Their resistance to toilet training included such bizarre elements as fear that they might be forced to eat feces or drink urine. Sadistic and aggressive behavior, always a cause for concern, might take the form of destroying toys or household furnishings, or harming animals or other kids. Some of these children developed a morbid interest in mutilation or a preoccupation with death, manifested in behaviors such as acting out dying, asking when they would die, and asking if humans eat dead people. There were kids who were terrified that something foreign had been put into their bodies, such as a bomb that would explode if they said the wrong thing. Toddlers lived in fear that they would be arrested by police and caged or sent to jail; that "bad people" would break into their homes and kill them and their families or burn their houses. They developed a terror of ghosts, monsters, the devil, magic, and occult subjects that went far beyond the usual childhood fears of the monster in the closet or under the bed. Some described seeing people in scary costumes, particularly monsters, ghosts, devils, and "Dracula," when Halloween was months away.

There were suspicious references to drugs, pills, "funny" candy, mushrooms, bad medicine, and needles or injections and their effects. Kids took to chanting odd songs in odder languages, or in English but with themes relating to sex and secrecy. They would refer to strangers as "my other Daddy" or "my other Mommy," or to a "family" at school, or speak of television characters as if they were real people. (This last often referred to a perpetrator tactic of posing as a television personality or other famous character in order to discredit the child. "Mickey Mouse put something in my bottom" tends not to wash very well in court.) They talked of being taken

to people's houses or other locations not usual for school outings, such as junkyards, churches, hospitals, or other schools. Some talked about pictures or films being taken at school at a time other than when school pictures are normally taken. Certainly, some of these signs by themselves might have other explanations, but seldom do they occur in isolation.

When the children do begin to talk, according to Gould, and the hundreds of other therapists who have now encountered such cases, they tell of abuse by people at their day care centers or schools or in their neighborhoods, or among Daddy and his friends or Mommy's new boyfriend and his family. These people gather in groups, sometimes small, sometimes larger. Often—but not always—they wear red or black robes and carry candles, usually black. They chant. They torture and kill animals. They kill babies.

They tie the children up and put them in closets or basements or isolate them in rooms with no windows. Captivity is terrifying; isolated captivity is the most terrifying of all, as any prison camp survivor can tell you. The abusers put the kids in cages and treat them like animals. They put them in coffins to "practice being dead" or as part of "death and rebirth" rituals. There might be snakes or insects in there with them. Sometimes it's a dead body. Sometimes they put the child into the body cavity of a dead animal... or a dead human. Sometimes they are left there and told they are going to die. Sometimes, a few terrifying hours later, a cult member will "come to their rescue," and they will bond to that cult member who was so "kind" to them.

Humiliation is one of the surest ways to break the human spirit, and degrading someone sexually is one of the surest roads to humiliation. These kids aren't just sexually molested, they are degraded. They are made to stand naked in front of all the other naked kids while urine and feces are smeared on their bodies. (Parents have picked up kids who were still damp from having been hosed off.) Sometimes they are forced

to eat excrement and drink urine. Three-year-olds can describe the taste of semen. Ritual instruments such as wands and crucifixes are inserted into them. They are filmed and photographed while being raped and sodomized by adults, or while performing sexual acts with other kids or with animals.

In order to dominate their victims, the abusers must convince them that there is no place of safety in the world. To do this, they must sever the connection between the victims and the secure world of their homes and families and prevent them from telling the people who will defend and protect them. So, they threaten not only the children but their families with torture, mutilation, and death. Or they convince the kids that their parents know all about what is being done to them, that they are secretly cult members too, and that they have sent them to this school to be hurt. They tell them that their parents aren't their real parents at all, that their real parents are the high priest and priestess of the cult.

Researchers and investigators generally agree on three categories of ritual abuse. First is what they consider true cult-based ritual abuse, in which abuse is performed not primarily for its own sake but for some religious or spiritual purpose based on cult beliefs. In the case of satanic ritual abuse, the rationale may be that children are "God's favorites" because of their innocence, and so their desecration represents a victory over God. (Ironically, Anton LaVey's Church of Satan forbids the abuse of children and animals on the basis that their state of natural innocence makes them Satan's favorites.)

Second is the "pseudoritual abuse" category. In this case, the abusers' primary goal in abusing children is usually to derive sexual pleasure; these abusers use the ritual elements to frighten their young victims into compliance during the abuse and silence in its aftermath. The third category is "psychopathological ritualism," which arises out of the perpetrator's mental illness. Typically, this is a case in which a lone individual steeped in satanic or other religious ideation and rituals is also a pedophile who molests children because of

his own disturbed needs. However, it should be stressed that these are not necessarily clear-cut categories, and there is a good deal of overlapping.

Dr. Jean Goodwin, author of *Sexual Abuse: Incest Victims and Their Families*, has done extensive research into the history of ritual abuse. There are reports going back centuries of renegade religious cults engaging in ritual sacrifice and cannibalism of fetuses and infants. An eyewitness account exists of an early Christian-era cult known as the Phibionites, whose practices sound similar to those reported by modern-day ritual abuse survivors: nocturnal feasts, fire, chants, fetal or infant sacrifice, cannibalism, and the ritual use of excrement and bodily fluids. Goodwin also points out that the writings of the Marquis de Sade and other sexual deviants contain many elements found in ritual abuse. Some modern apologists attempt to portray Sade as a romantic rebel whose stories of debauchery and torture represented some kind of noble experiment in self-discovery rather than vicious perversion. They speak of the "Luciferian grandeur" of his "poetic power" as he "rhapsodizes" about scenes of children being raped and murdered in front of their mothers.

Yet, the will to deny appears to be just as old as the reports themselves. "Until really fairly recently, the therapy community . . . had a great deal of difficulty believing that massive child abuse occurred," Goodwin says. "At one point in the very recent past, in the fifties, we thought that there must be some kind of genetic syndrome involving brittle bones and easy bleeding, easy bruising, and that's what we were seeing when we saw infants come in with multiple bone fractures, bruises, bleeding into their brains, because it was very difficult for us to believe this kind of thing was going on. So I don't think one necessarily needs to invoke a conspiracy to try to understand our difficulties with credibility."

As Dr. Susan Kelley and other researchers have noted, ritually abused children are at risk for long-term psychological repercussions, especially those involving dissociative disor-



ders. If a small child is continually brutalized and exploited sexually by the very adults upon whom he is dependent for safety—whether those adults are that child's parents or the care providers into whose hands he is entrusted—the child may try to defend himself by breaking into pieces psychologically. Unable to integrate the overwhelming terror and pain of ritual abuse with his need for a safe and stable environment, the child will dissociate, splitting his mind, banishing the traumatic events from consciousness. But that memory will remain in his subconscious, waiting to be reclaimed.

According to psychologists, the severe long-lasting trauma seen in ritual abuse cases is the result of the "cumulative effect of the extreme physical and psychological abuse." In simpler terms, these children experience more trauma because they have been subjected to more, and worse, abuse. Judith Herman, author of *Trauma and Recovery*, points out that traumatic events breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. Survivors lose their sense of safety, their sense of trust in the world and in others. People in situations of terror spontaneously cry out for their mothers or for God. "When this cry is not answered, the sense of basic trust is shattered," Herman observes. "Traumatized people feel utterly abandoned, utterly alone, cast out of the human and divine systems of care and protection that sustain life." The consequences reverberate throughout the victims' lives. "Thereafter, a sense of alienation, of disconnection, pervades every relationship, from the most intimate familial bonds to the most abstract affiliations of community and religion. When trust is lost, traumatized people feel that they belong more to the dead than to the living."

Situations involving the sacrifice of victims are particularly devastating to the child who survives ritual abuse because of tremendous feelings of guilt. Such victims have to come to grips not only with their own physical and sexual abuse but with having witnessed or been forced to participate in the torture or death of others. They have to overcome the feeling

that they are criminals because of what they have done. Even if the sacrifice was simulated, subjectively the child still believes it and feels responsible; the guilt and resulting trauma is the same regardless of whether the sacrifice actually occurred.

Despite lingering and often militant skepticism concerning this problem, a growing number of investigators and counselors are convinced that children really are being subjected to ritual abuse. They believe that their stories, coming as they do from all over the country, share too many parallels to be mere coincidence, and that the unusual content includes details of experiences and incidents that would be practically impossible for a young child to fantasize. Dr. Bennett G. Braun, medical director of the Dissociative Disorders Program and In-Patient Unit at the Rush North Shore Medical Center in Skokie, Illinois, has treated or consulted on more than one hundred ritual abuse cases from nearly every state in the country, as well as several patients from Canada and Europe. He has seen the overlap of names, locations, and arcane terminology used by patients in different states and countries evidently unacquainted with one another.

Roland Summit, speaking from years of experience in combating the sexual exploitation of children, expresses the frustration of dealing with doctrinaire skeptics when he notes that a given case can include accounts of ritual abuse by scores of children, yet "adults in our society will make the decision that those children shouldn't be believed." Summit is aware of over fifty day care centers that have been investigated and confirmed by at least one agency as having been involved in ritual abuse. "Yet, in almost every case there have been not even criminal charges laid," he notes. As soon as a case of purported multiple-victim, multiple-perpetrator ritual abuse is disclosed, "between journalists and skeptics and people with vested interests in exonerating people who might be under suspicion, the adult community will come together to label that case a fraud, and furthermore choose to blame the case on whatever adult heard the children." Summit decries

the prevailing willingness to believe that large numbers of children will concoct lurid horror stories just to please questioning adults.

From his perspective as a legal professional, Bill Hudson, the attorney we met in Chapter One, believes that the allegations of the ritual aspects of the case he is involved with are seen as intrinsically unbelievable by law enforcement. This has had the effect of rendering unbelievable all the other allegations made by the children. Hudson and others who have encountered this phenomenon point out that while police will accept the isolated realities of child prostitution and pornography, narcotics and weapons trafficking, child abuse and incest, most balk at accepting that all of these could go on within the context of a single enterprise. The suggestion that such an enterprise could be under the control of people with a satanic ideology almost always raises a stone wall of disbelief from law enforcement and a plaintive wail of "witch hunt!" from defense attorneys.

Hudson considers this unjustifiable narrow-mindedness. "If people will abuse children, sell pornography and so forth for money, it makes perfect sense that people who have a belief system which considers it acceptable to defile and abuse children, and who also can make money doing these things, will do it," he says. "And it also makes sense for them to bring in an element of satanism because it terrifies the children, it renders the children unbelievable later, in the event that they ever squeal. For those two reasons, leaving aside whether people actually believe in Satan, or whether satanists actually believe you should hurt children, introducing an element of satanism—whether real or feigned—is a very effective technique. Law enforcement by and large doesn't buy it."

Despite the much-publicized increase in the awareness of child abuse, as with adult rape, most cases are never reported. The cases that are reported are notoriously difficult to investigate. Sophisticated forms of infiltration and intelligence, as

well as extensive coordination, are generally necessary to reveal the exploitation of children, and this is particularly true in the highly secretive cult cases. It is not unusual for such a case to consist largely of bits of anecdotal evidence from different cases that investigators must attempt to assemble like a puzzle that may turn out to have crucial pieces missing. Investigators of child pornography have accumulated thousands of photos and films of nameless children, and there are thousands of children complaining of having been photographed or filmed, but who have not been matched up with the photographic evidence.

Even after a case comes to court, it may be plea-bargained away to minimal charges, or convictions may be obtained on the more narrow grounds of sexual molestation. Prosecutors often prefer to leave out children's testimony regarding cameras, drugs, group prostitution, and bizarre rituals. The mention of "ritual abuse" can thus end up being removed from the ritual abuse case, which can then successfully be prosecuted as an "ordinary" case of molestation. (When Summit reviewed some twenty-five investigations of child sexual abuse involving blood ritual, he found they had all become hopelessly confused and deadlocked, and he concluded that each failed attempt at prosecution reinforced the notion that these charges are ridiculous.) For these reasons, meaningful statistics on successful prosecution of ritual abuse are hard to come by.

Summit also points out the role of deliberate deception in the derailing of sexual abuse investigations and prosecutions. The active efforts to deceive investigators by esteemed professionals such as doctors, judges, attorneys, police officers, newspaper editors, school administrators and teachers, and even parents—who are secret pedophiles, pornography fans, and members of sex cults—are a largely unacknowledged factor in the notorious "difficulty" of all sexual abuse cases, and especially the very highly vulnerable cases involving

ritual abuse. When children disclose multiperpetrator abuse, they typically implicate "respectable" people, and other, undetected, molesters at the same professional level work hard to discredit those cases.

Most child victims who disclose ritual abuse complain of having been used in the production of pornography. Much of this pornography is shipped abroad to places where sex industries flourish, such as the Netherlands. From there it covertly finds its way back into the United States. It is often said that we have come a long way in recognizing the seriousness of the problem of the multibillion-dollar child prostitution and pornography industry. But it is equally obvious that we have not come far enough, since most people still refuse to recognize the full horror of this exploitation or the dimension of evil represented by its perpetrators.

In April 1993, the *New York Times* ran a story about the worldwide increase in the sexual exploitation of children. This mushrooming demand for virgins is motivated partially by the hope that these children are free from AIDS, but most of the customers are excited by the prospect of venturing into the taboo erotic territory of sex with children. In the brothels of Thailand, Brazil, and the Philippines, businessmen on "sex tours" arranged by travel agencies owned by pedophiles have their choice of children as young as eight.

Doctors see the terrible consequences to these children—the sexually transmitted diseases and the wounds and scars left by forced violations. *Sadism* is one of the terms the medical professionals apply to what they see. Part of the perpetrator's fun, it appears, is making the child suffer. "Often a father brings in a daughter ten or eleven years old, ripped and bleeding," says Dr. Duong Quynh Hoa, director of a pediatric hospital in Vietnam. "The children are in terrible pain." They need the money, the fathers say. It's a good time to do it. She's too young to get pregnant. One father who had brought in his terrorized eleven-year-old daughter

was philosophical about the lasting effects of the pain and humiliation his child had suffered: "She is very young now," he said. "She will grow up and she will forget."

"We must break down the wall of silence around this," Dr. Hoa declares.

In the United States, it appears that a lot of people have no problem with a child being raped as long as she later forgets. It is when she begins to remember, when she begins to break through that wall of silence, that the trouble starts. Especially if what she remembers is satanic ritual abuse. Sometimes it seems as if the public has decided that it will cordon off this one area of the wider problem of child abuse and refuse to look at it for what it really is. Yes, if they must, they will accept the fact that a much higher rate of incest exists than anyone was previously willing to acknowledge. They will accept that there are people called pedophiles who self-righteously believe that they have the right to sexually exploit children. They will even accept the fact that perhaps some of these people might have found jobs in child care centers, or perhaps even operated such centers, because it gave them access to a "smorgasbord" of children. Some will even admit that most molesters are not derelicts in raincoats hanging around schoolyards, but the guy next door. And sometimes his wife.

But despite the skeptics' insistence that there has been "not a shred of evidence" of satanic ritual abuse, legislators in several states have been sufficiently impressed with the successfully prosecuted cases and the alarming increase in reports to propose laws specifically forbidding the ritualized abuse of children and adults. Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, Idaho, and Texas now have laws against ritual abuse. The Idaho and Illinois statutes, which are virtually identical, spell out in great detail the definitions, stipulations, exclusions, aggravations, and penalties that define the criminalization and punishment of ritual abuse. In both these states, a person is guilty of felony ritual abuse of a child when in the presence of a

person under the age of eighteen he or she commits any of the following as part of a ceremony, rite, or other observance:

- A. Actually or in simulation, tortures, mutilates, or sacrifices any warm-blooded animal or human being;
- B. Forces ingestion, injection, or other application of any narcotic, drug, hallucinogen, or anaesthetic for the purpose of dulling sensitivity, cognition, recollection of, or resistance to any criminal activity;
- C. Forces ingestion, or internal application, of human or animal urine, feces, flesh, blood, bones, body secretions, nonprescribed drugs, or chemical compounds;
- D. Involves the child in a mock, unauthorized, or unlawful marriage ceremony with another person or representation of any force or deity, followed by sexual contact with the child;
- E. Places a living child into a coffin or open grave containing a human corpse or remains;
- F. Threatens death or serious harm to the child, his parents, family, pets, or friends which instills a well-founded fear in the child that the threat will be carried out; or
- G. Unlawfully dissects, mutilates, or incinerates a human corpse.

The criminal statutes in both states are careful to stipulate that these provisions of the law should not be construed to apply to lawful agriculture, animal husbandry, food preparation, wild game hunting and fishing, or branding of livestock. The lawful medical practice of circumcision as well as legally approved, licensed, or funded research projects are also exempt. Illinois also excuses the ingestion of animal meat or blood in the performance of a religious ceremony. The penalty

for a first offense in Idaho is a term of imprisonment not to exceed fifteen years. In both states, however, the penalty for a second or subsequent offense is life imprisonment. Idaho also includes a provision making cannibalism an offense unless committed under "extreme life-threatening conditions as the only apparent means of survival," a stipulation that can have a number of meanings in the context of ritual abuse.

Youth Officer Robert Jerry Simandl is a twenty-six-year veteran of the Chicago Police Department and a nationally recognized expert on satanic and occult-related crimes. Simandl campaigned to get the Illinois law passed after years of hearing the frustration of fellow officers who saw case after case of suspected ritual abuse fall through the cracks, at least in part because there was nothing in the abuse statutes covering children who had been forced to eat excrement or kill animals. He points out that the new statutes specifically prohibit the *ritual* abuse of children, whether satanic or otherwise. These laws are intended to deal head-on with the thorny issue of ritualism within the wider context of sadistic abuse.

A ritual abuse statute would have been a great help to a woman we'll call Susan Martin as she coped with her nightmarish experience with the phenomenon of satanic ritual abuse. Martin's children had begun "acting strange" in 1986, and on the recommendation of their therapist and doctor she had reported the situation to her local Department of Social Services. In Martin's case the abusers were her ex-husband and his friends.

The DSS investigated the children's allegations and told Martin to obtain a stop order on her ex-husband's visitation privileges. However, the hearing was held in another state, before a judge who was not interested in the opinion of the DSS where Susan had made her report. Martin was forced to continue to allow visitation or lose custody of her children and was slapped with three days in jail and a \$7,000 fine into the bargain. But when her daughter returned from the Christmas 1987 visitation, she told her mother that she just



"couldn't stand the secrets anymore." In therapy she began to disclose a horror story of sexual and ritual abuse. "My father would blindfold me and take me to basements with tunnels and dead animals, and jars of blood and urine we were forced to drink," she said. "There were pregnant women undergoing abortions or the murders of their children. I remember black hooded robes, putting kids in cages and treating them like animals." Her father had placed a "death pill" in her vagina and told her that if she ever told she would blow up.

The defense attorneys strategically "aged" the case with successive delays, but finally their time ran out and they had to go to court. The children had to testify. "I was terrified to testify with my father there in the courtroom," Susan Martin's daughter recalls. "But I was also afraid I might have to go back to him." Rather than face that prospect, she endured five hours of testimony. Martin's ex-husband was convicted of emotional and sexual abuse. Following the verdict, Martin formed an advocacy group and was able to get some attention paid to the problem in the form of U.S. Senate hearings. She says she has since listened to more than eight hundred cases of ritual abuse. She has plenty of company. There have been many cases such as hers, and it is perhaps their cumulative weight that will finally bring about recognition of the terrible reality of this problem.

In the meantime, Jerry Simandl and others point out the need for a cohesive, organized team effort in dealing with ritual abuse cases, the sort of coordinated process that could have helped to prevent Susan Martin and her daughter's nightmarish experience. From the first disclosure of ritual abuse, the most expert personnel obtainable must be assembled to deal with the case. Physical examinations must be done by an expert in child sexual abuse, psychological exams by a qualified child psychiatrist. The child protection agencies, the state's attorney, and law enforcement must all work together to determine whether the case warrants prosecution and/or

intervention by child welfare agencies. Above all, investigators must remain objective, avoiding the extremes of hysteria and denial. Simandl urges the formation of a "mass molestation task force" and a nationwide database to coordinate information on child molestation and ritual sexual abuse. As more investigators begin to follow such guidelines, real progress will be made in shedding light on this most vicious and bizarre form of child abuse.

## CHAPTER SIX

# Adult Survivors of Ritual Abuse

In order to escape accountability for his crimes, the perpetrator does everything in his power to promote forgetting. Secrecy and silence are the perpetrator's first line of defense. If secrecy fails, the perpetrator attacks the credibility of his victim. If he cannot silence her absolutely, he tries to make sure that no one listens. To this end, he marshals an impressive array of arguments, from the most blatant denial to the most sophisticated and elegant rationalization. After every atrocity one can expect to hear the same predictable apologies: it never happened; the victim lies; the victim exaggerates. . . .

Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*

With Argive women to the Queen of Heaven.  
I weave upon the whirring loom no tale  
Of Pallas routing Titans. Oh, instead,  
I face an altar soaked with bloody death.

I hear the cry for pity and the moans  
Of men—a thing too hideous to be told.

Euripides, *Iphigenia in Taurus*

There are thousands of women who report having been childhood victims of mind-numbingly vicious and brutal forms of physical and mental torture at the hands of members of their families. They tell of having been subjected to every conceivable kind of abuse as well as some that would be inconceivable to any normal human being. Most also remember being farmed out to adults for sex and photographed for child pornography by satanic child-prostitution rings. Skeptics use the stunning dimensions of this problem—thousands of complaints have surfaced in the past decade—as "proof" that the whole thing must be a sham. Obviously, some of these accounts can be attributed to errors, fantasies, delusions, or other causes. However, none of the alternative explanations that have been offered for the overall phenomenon—such as "urban legends" or "false memories"—is consistent with the actual content of most ritual abuse accounts. Indeed, most of these attempts at debunking raise more questions than they answer.

False claims can and do arise in virtually any context, but no reasonable person suggests that the testimony of victims of rape, domestic violence, war, concentration camps, or natural disasters should be dismissed out of hand because pretenders sometimes come forward with tall tales. However, such hardcore skepticism is regularly aimed at the victims of sadistic sexual abuse when such abuse is alleged to have been performed in a ritual setting with satanic overtones. This is an unfortunate situation, because even if only a relatively small percentage of these reports are true we are dealing with a problem of horrifying dimensions, with implications for society at large as well as for the more immediate victims.

"Fran Johnson" is a scoffer's worst nightmare, a walking

refutation of the stereotype of ritual abuse survivors as hysterical fundamentalist Christian housewives whose lurid memories of demonic torture have been induced by overzealous therapists. Extremely cautious on the subject of religion, Johnson has no tales of satanic possession to tell. She is well aware that she was the victim of depraved and brutal humans, her father among them, who employed their considerable and truly diabolical skills in the arts of manipulation and torture in order to gratify their perversions. Having reclaimed and integrated her memories, she now conducts workshops for mental-health professionals about the realities of ritual torture and mind control.

Johnson has always remembered some of what happened to her, but other memories seemed so bizarre that she discounted them. "I grew up as a kid thinking I had been made to kill other children, but of course that was crazy so it must just mean there was something wrong with me," she recalls. It was not until she reached adulthood that she began to realize that some of these "bizarre" memories might indeed be true. Throughout her life, doctors had found mysterious scars, the evidence of previously broken and dislocated bones, and vaginal damage. Unable to remember the abuse, Johnson denied any knowledge of their origins. In this she was following the familiar pattern in which victims of severe, prolonged childhood abuse predictably suffer from symptoms of pathological dissociation, in which the memory of trauma has never been psychologically integrated and is not available to the victim in verbal form.

In cases of extreme abuse, the victim's self-defense systems may have shut down entirely as she retreated into an altered state of consciousness in order to find some manner of escape when physical flight was impossible. This detached state is similar to a hypnotic trance, a normal property of human consciousness that can be utilized to cope with pain and terror. In such cases the memory of the trauma is split off from ordinary awareness, with only fragments emerging

as intrusive symptoms "triggered" by reminders of the traumatic event. But it leaves the victim unable to form or articulate any clear, coherent narrative of what happened. "If I could have tolerated the knowledge, it would all have been there," Johnson says of her memories. "It was that accessible, it's just like a trick mirror. You can't name it if you can't bear to think of it."

Once Johnson had progressed enough to begin to deal with the physical evidence, she was impressed by the healing power of therapy. Her memories began with child prostitution and pornography and the images of robes and candles followed from there. But it is the memories of prostitution, not of ritual abuse, that she finds hardest to deal with. Her father's cult had pimped her from earliest childhood through her mid-teens to people in their neighborhood, including parishioners of the church they attended. She had retained only cloudy memories of the sexual coercion and abuse.

Transgenerational satanic abuse effectively represents a synthesis of all the forms of captivity a victim can endure: prison, slavery, concentration camp, religious cult, brothel, and family. The cultic units function as laboratories for the systems of coercive control characteristic of such situations. The systematic, repetitive infliction of terror and abuse convinces the victim that her captors are omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient, that escape is impossible, and that her very survival depends on abject, total compliance. "The goal of the perpetrator," Judith Herman observes, "is to instill in his victim not only fear of death but also gratitude for being allowed to live." The final step toward this total psychological control of the victim is to force her to "violate her own moral principles and to betray her basic human attachments." Once she succumbs and actively participates in the victimization and sacrifice of others, or is subjected to sexual degradation and humiliation, the victim is filled with self-loathing and is truly "broken."

Transgenerational cultists secretly pride themselves on their ability to escape detection, and on their arcane knowledge, which they carefully keep secret from "profane" outsiders. This adds to their delusions of superiority. Following the satanist pattern, the members of Johnson's father's cult "viewed themselves as very cunning and clever and other beings as being incredibly stupid," she says. They channeled this alleged intellectual prowess into devising inventive ways of hurting helpless children. "One had a degree in mechanical engineering, and modified many devices from children's games to torture devices," she recalls. "You know those racing cars where you have a control stick so you can accelerate the car when you play? That can be made to deliver a graded amount of electricity if you take those wires and stick them in someone's mouth."

One cult member was a clinical psychologist; another was a pediatrician. "They have to have doctors when they're hurting kids that badly," Johnson says. Gordon Thomas's book, *Journey Into Madness*, deals with the issue of doctors who supervise political and criminal torture sessions, a practice that goes back to the days of the witchcraft trials and the Inquisition. According to Thomas, hundreds, possibly thousands, of physicians around the world perform such tasks on a regular basis. Their services are necessary for the torturers to know how much force can be applied without killing the victim and how much pain he can stand. Johnson remembers the cult doctor saying things like, "No, let her come a little more out of the drugs before you hit her again, she won't feel it if you do it now."

Participants in underground satanic cults formulate elaborate religious ideologies to rationalize their behavior. Johnson believes that the cult she was raised in was based on a perverse interpretation of Christianity, which constituted her nominal religious upbringing. The group believed that God governed some other world but was impotent in regard to this one,

which was chained to the power of Satan. Cult ideologies reflecting some variation of this belief are common in the reports of ritual abuse survivors.

Teachings such as those followed by the cult Johnson survived can be traced back to the gnostic sects of the early Christian era, which taught that Satan ruled the world and God was far away and uninvolved. Johnson's case also highlights the issue of the historical progression of the perversion of Catholic belief within satanism. The roots of the black mass stretch back to before the Dark Ages and beyond. If any of these gnostic belief systems have survived, they have been refined in secret over the course of many centuries.

One way Johnson deals with the skeptics she frequently encounters is by pointing out the dynamics of denial and how it repeats itself, no matter the specific details of the horror being reported. She views most organized forms of skeptical response, such as the crusade mounted by the False Memory Syndrome Foundation, as reified forms of cultural denial, pointing out that no one wants to believe that this is going on, least of all the victims. "If I didn't have such an investment in having to believe," she says, "I'd be knocking on their door, saying, 'Help me, take me away from all this horror.' Give me the bottle labeled 'Drink Me,' and let's go away to Wonderland. I can't—it's too far for me from Hell to Wonderland, and I can't split the two the way that people like this split things in their minds."

As a child prostitute, Johnson saw some of the organizational workings of the cult, although most of her experience was with what she calls the "grunts, like the guys who handle the kids." She suspects that these groups recruit in ways similar to those of the mafia while also generating management from within. "They want kids who have been hurt to come back and continue the family business," she says. She also suspects that certain trusted customers are brought into the lower levels of the operation, having already "demonstrated a mindset" congenial to the business.



Johnson speaks of a certain "aura" among perpetrators, an air of rigidity, a childlike belief that things have to be done a certain way, and a demand for total submissiveness at the lower levels of the cult. She also notes that most child pornographers are obsessed with making it appear that the children like what is being done to them and what they are being forced to do. Judith Herman observes that perpetrators of chronic abuse seem to need psychologically to justify their crimes, to create willing victims. Nevertheless, kids usually have to be beaten to induce them to perform sex acts before a camera. The cultists who abused Johnson would cover up her bruises for the camera. They once used a paralytic drug, probably curare, on her, telling her that Satan had chosen her and she was going to die.

Although Johnson is a striking example of a highly functional survivor, she is by no means unique. The therapists who work with these women comment with wonder on how logical and rational they are, how consistent their stories remain, how similar the stories of women who have never met. Although skeptics still cry that there is "no evidence" to support victims' claims, therapists have been able to corroborate elements of their stories in numerous cases by checking medical histories and school attendance records.

Still, the vast majority of these survivors must struggle to be heard. Their therapists come under attack as well. "It is not only the patients but also the investigators of posttraumatic conditions whose credibility is repeatedly challenged," writes Herman, who has had much experience in the area. "Clinicians who listen too long and too carefully to traumatized patients often become suspect among their colleagues as though contaminated by contact. Investigators who pursue the field too far beyond the bounds of conventional belief are often subjected to a kind of professional isolation."

Many of the investigators who deal on a daily basis with the sordid realities of the multibillion-dollar sex industry have little trouble believing that satanic ritual abuse goes on. In

1990, I was contacted by a private investigator from New York who was working on a case involving a pediatrician/psychiatrist who had been indicted on one count of child molestation. There were strong indications of a criminal network, and two executives of a video production company had been implicated. The clients were doctors and other professionals. According to the investigator, the case had to do with child pornography tapes with ritualistic overtones that were made in this country and sent overseas for distribution. There were very frightened witnesses coming forth, grown men who said they had been involved in this operation, who were speaking of murders and suicides, and who claimed to have been threatened with "satanic" retribution. But the tapes had not been recovered, and this case, like so many others, was foundering on the lack of physical evidence to back up the testimony. Ironically, even when such tapes are found, their existence does not become public knowledge if the evidence is sealed and the case is settled out of court.

Just as there have been convictions in cases of ritual abuse of children in day care centers, there have also been guilty verdicts in cases of abuse in transgenerational cults. One of the earliest was handed down in November 1984, when a jury in Vancouver, Washington, found Gail Lorraine Ray guilty of murdering her six-year-old daughter by holding a plastic bag over her head. Several trial witnesses had testified that Ray was the high priestess of a satanic cult and that she had predicted her daughter's death. Jeffrey Becker, age thirteen, testified that he had held down the struggling child while Ray suffocated her. He pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit murder. Becker's father, Harold, reportedly had a "history of sexual relations with the victim."

In February 1993, John Shipman of Santa Barbara was convicted of four counts of lewd contact with a child under age fourteen and eleven counts of rape with a foreign object. The victim was his niece, whose mother had sent her to live with Shipman after she ran away at age thirteen. He had

videotaped "discipline" sessions in which he stripped, beat, and shaved the terrified girl in his basement "war room." She testified that she had been afraid to run away from her uncle, who she said had claimed to be a witch. In February 1994, Frances Pell of Connecticut received a suspended sentence and three years' probation after pleading no contest to charges that she sexually abused a young boy and then used threats of witchcraft to discourage him from reporting the abuse.

In 1985, Robert "Redhawk" Hunt—a self-proclaimed "warlock"—his wife, Mardy "Bluestar" Hunt, and another couple, Linda Kierce and her fiance, Larry Kirkland, were sentenced to three years in prison for child molestation. The prosecution's key witness testified that the defendants had taken part in religious ceremonies in a "chapel" containing an altar and a "witches' bible." The witness, Gloria Bohannon, said that the rites involved nudity and sex, and that she had seen Redhawk Hunt fondle his own four-year-old daughter while telling her, "Daddy's going to make you feel good." Bohannon said that the Hunts had initiated her into what they claimed was Wicca during a nude ritual that included sex acts. However, a painting displayed in their ritual chamber showed the "mother goddess" with a satanic inverse pentagram surrounding her head like a halo. During regular services, participants—adults in their thirties and forties—dressed in black robes offered prayers to "the land of the dead" and directed curses at their enemies. Defense attorneys, as might be expected, labeled the whole thing a "witch hunt" and railed about constitutional protection of religion.

Over the years I have talked with a number of people who claimed to be survivors of ritual abuse. Some, like Fran Johnson, were victims of cults that fit the standard pattern of transgenerational groups that practiced some highly secretive form of satanism and engaged in pornography and other criminal activities. A few were raised by parents who were members of long-established traditional occult groups whose

members publicly deny any involvement in this kind of abuse. Some came from families who participated in both mainstream Western religious traditions and, secretly, in various folk traditions that, while not overtly satanic in the traditional sense, involved elements of terror and sexual abuse.

One particularly memorable survivor was "Helen," who told me she had been raised in a pedophile family. Her grandfather was a mortician who used his business facilities for rituals and blackmail for the purpose of enforcing silence. The high priest of the cult was a coroner. She claims that he kept a "black book" that contained a murderous version of the black mass. She recalls one day-long ritual that involved a burning cross, during which she claims to have seen a priest murdered. In Helen's family cult, everything was a parody of the Catholic Church, and cannibalism was used to mock the Christian Eucharist. The bones of Christians—not difficult for an undertaker to obtain—were used in the rituals: leg bones featured in dances, and other old bones were placed on the altar in certain occult patterns to attract power. Helen said it was explained to her as a parody of the cult of saint's relics in the early and medieval Catholic Church, and that some cults treated certain bones, such as finger bones, as fetishes.

Helen was subjected to physical abuse that resulted in a lot of health problems later, including burn damage to her uterus, which she said had been confirmed by doctors. She recalled the cultists putting drugged people on crosses and mutilating them afterward, and she says she saw babies crucified. The children may have been obtained through private, paid adoptions. The time she was put on a cross, she said, she was held up by twine. This story eerily recalls the large cross, with its twine laces, found in the woods of southern Massachusetts by detective Alan Alves. Helen remembered ritualists dancing around in white paint, drugged, and laughing with bloodlust. In a ritual in which she was "betrothed" to Satan, she was painted red and told she was to be "defiled through debauch-

ery." She says that the cultists were looking forward to an apocalyptic victory for Satan. Their philosophy of Satan was "living death," power in death, and they would try to simulate death in life. They wanted to create an army of the dead for Satan, the Lord of the Underworld. After his victory, the armies of the world would all belong to him. They used something they called *word possessing*, which involved talking continually to break the victim's will.

Helen had suffered through the isolation that came from remembering, but had gotten help from her church and from investigators. She came under attack by cultists after speaking out anonymously on a national television show. She received threatening phone calls, someone broke in to her house and stole items, and young men in cars and vans staked out her home and followed her and members of her family. She suspected that her mail had been tampered with and that her phone was tapped. She took the precaution of sending copies of her story to several other people she trusted with instructions to "go public" if anything happened to her.

Helen met an investigator, "Jack," when she visited her goddaughter in another state and told him her suspected problems with cult harassment. Although skeptical, he and his investigative group checked out her goddaughter's phone. To their surprise, they discovered that it was indeed tapped, as were the lines of three or four other women with whom Helen had been in contact. Jack told me that his people were able to trace the taps to an office in a midwestern state and to obtain a warrant. When police broke in, they found computer and telephone equipment for "switching" information to other phone numbers. The computer "dumped" all its data as soon as the door was forced. According to Jack, this setup was a multimillion-dollar illegal operation—not just the office, but all the taps, computers, phone lines, and other equipment, a situation that tends to indicate the presence of money from drugs, porn, prostitution, and other forms of

organized crime. The case was turned over to federal investigators, but I have not been able to obtain further information, since both Helen and Jack have taken off for parts unknown.

Ritual abuse turns up in families with a great variety of conventional religious backgrounds, but a number of survivors and researchers have observed that Catholic and Mormon families seem especially vulnerable. Both religious systems incorporate a high component of mysticism, and both place a heavy emphasis on hierarchy, obedience to authority, and ritual. The Catholic Church has, of course, traditionally been a target for satanists.

In 1991, San Francisco researcher Linda Walker was studying patterns of genetic disease in Mormon families when she noticed a high incidence of reports of ritual abuse among her respondents. Her inquiries led her to Jerald and Sandra Tanner, who had obtained a copy of a confidential memo by Mormon bishop Glenn Pace expressing his concern that intergenerational satanism had become a problem within the church. Pace claimed to have interviewed more than sixty victims of ritual abuse, all of them Mormon Church members. Walker's research has convinced her that the problem of intergenerational satanism within the Mormon community is linked to Mormon fundamentalists, extreme right-wing survivalists, and hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and Aryan Nations, some of which also engage in serious criminal activities.

Survivor "Grace Miller" endured an experience of ritual abuse in a dualistic Catholic/satanist family that appears to have been even more extreme in its beliefs than Fran Johnson's. Miller, the mother of two grown children, is director of a nonprofit victim-advocacy organization that works to help survivors, educate professionals and the public, and aid in the systematic tracking of ritual abuse cases.

Miller gives ritual abuse a fairly broad definition: the systematic abuse of a living creature, often done under the guise of religious expression. The invocation of Satan is not a

requirement, only an option. Miller divides ritual abuse into three categories roughly comparable to those outlined by researchers such as David Finkelhor: ritualized abuse, or abuse done over a period of time with certain ritualized elements; cultic abuse, which is more organized and involves more people, often family systems; and satanic ritual abuse, the focus of which is explicitly religious in nature, specifically the worship of Satan.

Miller says her family participated in a satanic cult concurrently with strict Roman Catholic practice. She says her parents "hid behind religious institutions—they were hyper-Catholic and they were hypersatanic." She recalls coming into the house from a satanic ritual and kneeling down with her family to say the rosary, her mother wailing the prayers in a way that terrorized her. Miller attended Catholic school for twelve years. She recalls that in those days, the focus of the religion she was taught in parochial school was the certain punishment for sin at the hands of the personification of evil—Lucifer, Satan, the Devil. God was omnipotent, but he would not always be there to intervene. Satan, however, was always out to get you, always exerting his power to tempt you. It has been observed that the Catholic Church made a mistake in centuries past by emphasizing the power of Satan. Miller agrees. "I'm sure that wasn't what they intended," she says of her religious education. "But the result was that Satan seemed more powerful and more immediate, more able to act in the world."

Much of the abuse Miller remembers took place during the 1950s on a farm in what is now a suburb of a large American city. Her parents were respectable, prosperous, high-profile figures in the community, as were several other members of their cult. The farm was carefully laid out so that small areas out in the fields were available for ritual sites, a configuration that would not be noticeable except from the air. (Clinical psychologist David Sakheim reports that one of his patients obtained an aerial photograph of the farm where she was

allegedly abused as a child. The picture reveals a number of features that the survivor had previously described, including stone walls laid out in the form of occult symbols.)

The altar used by Miller's cult was a simple, weathered wooden table that was kept in plain view under the back porch. It had sliding panels that could be pulled out to form a cross, but these were not visible to the casual observer. This hide-in-plain-sight arrangement had the added advantage, from the cult's point of view, of providing Miller and her siblings with a constant visual reinforcement of the cult's presence.

An emphasis on psychological manipulation is illustrated by an incident Miller remembers when cult members drugged her, then taunted her into making a run for her house. As she ran she heard a sound like a gunshot and felt a sharp pain in her back. Thinking she had been shot, she fell to the ground. She was then dragged back to the altar by cultists chanting that they had killed her and would bring her back to life. She remembers looking in the mirror for a bullet wound the next morning and seeing nothing but a bruise—and being convinced that she had indeed been shot and healed by the cult. Years later, when she remembered the incident, she realized that someone had thrown a stone and hit her in the back. The rest was mind control, in this case with the intention of teaching her that she could not trust her senses.

Like Fran Johnson and many other survivors, Miller has definite physical evidence of the torture to which she was subjected. She has had extensive surgery on her reproductive organs to correct damage and scarring that her doctors say is consistent with the ravages they have seen in women who have had botched or unprofessional abortions. Like other abuse survivors, she remembers being forcibly impregnated in a ritual, and says that the three-month-old fetus was harvested and cannibalized by the cult members on the summer solstice. Her parents were alarmed when she nearly died from the forced abortion since "they would have had a hard time



explaining that." Miller adds that her mother was astonished and frightened when she managed to conceive a child after her marriage, and she suspects that the cult's intention had been to render her infertile. After delivering her second child, doctors advised her that another pregnancy could cost her her life. After "bleeding constantly for two years," Miller had a hysterectomy at age twenty-seven.

Dental X rays show evidence of extensive childhood fractures of her jaw. Miller says these probably occurred when her father, who was high priest of the cult, pried open her jaws and forced her to take a bite of the heart of a sacrificed animal. Her dentist, who at first assumed that the poorly healed fractures must have been the result of a car accident, told her they were consistent with that kind of force used on immature bones. Miller has other memories of horrors that are frighteningly similar to accounts of other survivors. She remembers vividly the feel of a still-beating dog's heart that had been cut out and placed in her hand. She remembers the sight of her brother draped in the dog's hide, blood dripping down his face and body. She remembers communions in which urine was used instead of wine.

Miller says that her parents showed no concern for her physical or mental pain. She suffered in silence and without outside help. Her teachers suspected nothing. "I went to Catholic school," she says, "and anyone who went to Catholic school back then would know the uniforms pretty much covered everything." Her school records show puzzling dips in her academic performance. "The teachers would always say I didn't pay attention," she recalls. "But I would dissociate; I would be looking Out the window to see if my mother was coming." On her fortieth birthday, she treated herself to the removal of a large mole that the cultists had always pointed out to her as the Devil's mark, much in the fashion of the witch hunters of centuries past.

At age twenty she married, aware only that she had to get out of her parents' house for the sake of her sanity. Having

been raised in a family in which everyone was involved in the abusive cult, she found it difficult to adjust to the kindness and normalcy of her husband and his relatives. "They cared about each other in a way I couldn't comprehend, so I concluded they were crazy," she recalls. "It slowly dawned on me that they weren't crazy, but my family was. That came as a very painful thing." As these memories began to surface, Miller entered therapy. When she finally tried to confront her mother, she received a chilling response: "I forgive you for making me treat you that way." That was the last contact she had with any member of her family. Her siblings deny the truth of her memories.

Although she is not a victim of MPD (Multiple Personality Disorder), Miller says she did repress her memories for many years, preferring to dissociate whenever they threatened to surface. There were more practical considerations as well. She feared that the local social welfare agencies might take away her children if they knew of her bizarre family history. This fed her cult-induced fears of being incompetent and unworthy.

Like Fran Johnson, Gracie Miller is tolerant and patient with skeptics. She has seen the looks of horror change to ones of disbelief on the faces of the audiences at the training sessions she conducts for police officers. Miller believes that research and documentation are important in establishing the reality of ritual abuse. Her organization's research is aimed at finding out whether reported cases of missing persons, grave robberies, desecration of churches and cemeteries, appearance of graffiti, hate crimes, and the like can be shown to occur on certain significant dates, such as Halloween, Beltane, Christmas, or various other dates on the satanist calendar.

"Jeff Monroe," who works with Miller, points out that the FBI has no actual statistics on ritual abuse and occult-related crime because there is no section or forum to which such cases are reported. This is part of the reason why it is

so difficult to prosecute crimes involving ritual abuse, and why prosecutors often opt to go with just the simple sexual abuse charges. Their priority is to get a conviction, not to educate the public about ritual abuse.

Miller and Monroe have also seen the terrible psychological toll on children who have been programmed to harm themselves or to maintain silence. One small child who had been placed in a foster home became increasingly agitated as the time approached for her to start kindergarten. Following the well-meant advice of her therapist, the foster family had been encouraging her to look forward to this event. Eventually she disclosed in therapy that *kindergarten* was a trigger word that her family's cult had used to program her to attempt suicide. Whether such a young child would have succeeded is questionable, but fortunately the problem was discovered in time to prevent any attempt.

In another case, a teenager who had been suffering from triggered memories and suicidal thoughts remembered something—probably a suppository that harmlessly melted—being placed in her vagina by cult members when she was a small child. She was told that it would explode if she ever told. Unfortunately, she disclosed the abuse just at the time when her first menstrual period started, and for three days she was convinced—to the point of making out a will—that she was indeed "exploding." (Menstruation, which Miller says was viewed with religious awe in her cult, is often used as a trigger device, especially because of the evocative effects of blood.)

Monroe is concerned with the inability of many survivors to afford the intense treatment they need. Because of the costs of therapy, medication, and other aspects of rehabilitation, which can easily run into hundreds or even thousands of dollars a month, many survivors are either going without treatment or are unnecessarily institutionalized, a move that plays into the hands of abusers and skeptics who would like to show that all alleged ritual abuse survivors are "crazy."

Although support services for cult survivors and their families are growing, they are still inadequate.

Miller has been able to retain her sense of humor, which she feels is essential for survivors. But it is different from the skewed, bizarre sense of humor—always in the form of crude jokes at the expense of others—that she remembers her perpetrators having.

Too many people seem to operate on the naive assumption that activities like this could not possibly go on because the perpetrators would be caught and punished. However, as Civia Tamarkin and other investigators have pointed out, it is not that simple. The truth is that bodies remain undiscovered because people who are expert at disposing of bodies, especially infant bodies, can do so extremely effectively. Not everyone who disappears winds up on a centralized list of missing persons. Not everyone who disappears was even recorded as having been born. Certainly it is difficult for a clandestine organization to cover up multiple evidence of criminal practices, but difficult is not the same as impossible. And when one begins to look into the actual circumstances of some of these cases, it quickly becomes apparent that finding the bodies and arresting the bad guys is not as easy as it sounds.

Bill Hudson has experienced the frustrations and ambiguities involved in trying to trace the identities of children of families who have been implicated in ritual abuse. In a given case, the alleged parents of the children in question may turn out not to be their parents at all. "The mother has one name and the father has another name, and the kid is forty years younger than his mother, and then it turns out that she's not really his mother at all," Hudson says. "And then you trace it back from there in the birth and marriage records, and you go through several levels, and you end up where you can't figure out who the real mother and father are." In some cases, these kids don't even officially exist. "There are thousands and thousands of undocumented children," says Hudson.

"It's not like somebody has to run into a hospital and steal a baby."

Even when a likely corpse does turn up, it is no guarantee that a link with ritual abuse can be conclusively established. Consider the case of "Baby X," the still-unidentified infant whose remains were found in 1989 outside Rupert, a farm town in southeast Idaho. One cloudy November day, a group of friends whose Jeep had bogged down in mud were walking by a local landfill looking for help when they discovered a tiny charred body, hardly more than a skeleton, lying in what appeared to be the inside drum of a washer or drier. Not even sure whether what they had found was human, they notified police.

Minidoka County Coroner Arvin Hansen called on Kerry Patterson, a former U.S. Air Force crash investigator experienced with badly burned bodies, to help with the autopsy. They were able to determine that the infant was between one and six weeks old and had died about five days before her remains were found. The description of what else they discovered formed a pathetic litany of horror. Before her body was burned, the infant had been disemboweled; only the lungs and a portion of the upper heart chamber remained of her internal organs. Her body had been placed in the metal drum, doused in gasoline, and set afire. They had found barely enough skin to determine that she had been white or a light-skinned Hispanic. Patterson believes that more skin should have survived on the side of the body that was in contact with the metal container, and thinks she may have been skinned before she was burned. He also believes that both feet and one arm were twisted off—not gnawed by predators—after the body was burned. He and Coroner Hansen ruled the death an "undetermined homicide."

Residents of southern Idaho had for years heard rumors of satanic cults engaging in ritual sacrifice, but this was the first time a body had turned up. Minidoka County Sheriff Ray Jarvis had grown a bit weary of chasing down reports of

hooded figures sacrificing cats and drinking blood down by the river in the middle of the night. He never found anything, but some of the reports came from reliable people, so he kept an open mind.

Investigators set up a special Crime Stoppers hotline offering a \$1,000 reward for information leading to an arrest or to the identification of Baby X. They followed up every lead. Nothing. No one came forward to claim the body. Hospital files turned up no record of the infant having been born in the state of Idaho. Meanwhile, wild rumors and accusations began cropping up. While checking out leads, police officers talked with a number of adults who admitted to being Satan worshippers, but none who confessed to sacrificing babies. "We only kill people if they need to be killed," one of the faithful demurred. But some tantalizing bits of information did turn up. One alleged survivor who wrote to the sheriff's office said that many of the babies born to "breeders" were severely retarded because of all the drugs used on the mothers. These babies were born in cult homes and no records were made of their births. She told of ritual sacrifices, mutilations, hearts being torn out, blood being collected and drunk. And she told of limbs being twisted off.

Then, in July 1990, a ten-year-old boy living in California, whose father was being investigated for child abuse, told authorities that he had witnessed the ritual sacrifice of an infant in his home state of Idaho. The family had previously lived in the Rupert area. The boy—known only as Timothy to protect his identity—bore a number of burn marks in various stages of healing. One member of his family was a "witch," he said.

Timothy's story had some disturbing parallels to the Baby X case. He communicated largely by drawing pictures, which he would then interpret. One showed a barrel with fire and a baby. Timothy drew five of his pictures for Rupert Police detective Terry Quinn, an officer trained in the questioning of children suspected to have been abused, who had been

sent to California to investigate the lead. The pictures show frowning people engaging in what appear to be sacrificial rituals and are littered with bodies stretched out on what look to be altars. In some of the pictures, the victims' genitals are mutilated, their hearts cut out. One picture shows what appears to be a device that draws blood into a container, which ritualists then drink. In this picture, the celebrants, ringed around the altar in a double row, are smiling. Only the victim's mouth is turned down. In another picture, a man Timothy identified as his father stands lookout on the top of a building.

Timothy said that the satanists placed him on a table next to a Bible, then prayed to someone apparently costumed as the Devil. They then tortured and abused him sexually. They told him that sacrifices are done in the Bible, so they do them as well, but they dedicate them to Satan. They sacrificed animals and infants. "They just put them on the table and pretty soon the Devil makes a fire and they are on fire," Timothy said. "My mom and dad are there, and they watch." Sometimes his mother was also sexually abused.

Almost a year before Baby X's death, Timothy's father had jumped bail in 1988 rather than face a court appearance on charges of assault and disturbing the peace. He was arrested on felony drug charges for trying to sell marijuana to an undercover cop during an investigation by the Idaho Attorney General's Office. The boy's father denied Timothy's charges and claimed the family was long gone from the Rupert area when Baby X was found.

In November 1991, Idaho Attorney General Larry Echo-Hawk's office was called in to investigate the Baby X case, and issued a statement that no evidence of satanic ritual—or indeed of homicide—had been found. The pathologist had found no evidence of mutilation with a sharp instrument but had found teeth marks consistent with those causing damage by small predators. There were indications of pneumonia in the lungs. Therefore, the infant's death could be attributable

to disease, the missing body parts to predatory animals. Still, the pathologist was not willing to support any particular theory as to how Baby X died. There is no avoiding the fact that someone doused her corpse with gasoline and burned it, but this could have been a clumsy attempt at cremation. No one was willing to say for sure. However, the investigators found no evidence placing any member of Timothy's family in the Rupert area anywhere near the time of the infant's death. They concluded that the boy's father was not a suspect. "The case is not closed," chief criminal deputy Michael Kane told reporters. The Attorney General's office would continue to follow up leads.

Is there any reason to believe that Baby X was a victim of ritual sacrifice? They certainly had a body, but the body was not found at a ritual site, nor was it surrounded by satanic symbols or artifacts. The deceased may or may not have been a victim of homicide. Then, hundreds of miles away, in another state, a young boy tells a tale of satanic sacrifice with chilling echoes of Baby X's death. But there is no evidence to place the parents at the scene of Baby X's death.

And so the Baby X case remains a mystery, while the rumors and speculation continue.

It is, no doubt, a healthy sign that we have so much trouble accepting the reality of deliberate, calculated, ongoing cruelty inflicted on children by their own families. But it is also a luxury that we cannot afford. "Too terrible to be believed" is not a valid evaluation in light of the lessons of history or the evidence of the nightly news broadcasts. Too many of the separate elements of ritual abuse—the forced confinement of women, the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, the secret celebration of violent sexual perversions, the torture of prisoners, the atrocities committed in the name of ideology—are known to exist. We cannot reject the possibility that they all exist together as a complex criminal phenomenon.

**THERE IS NO DEFENSE AGAINST AN EVIL WHICH ONLY THE**



**VICTIMS AND THE PERPETRATORS KNOW EXISTS**, reads the sign over my desk. We owe it to the victims of ritual abuse to recognize both their suffering and their courage and to make every effort to put a stop to the cruel and vicious activities of their abusers.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# The Presidio Child Molestations

When Red Bluff attorney Cynthia Angell was taken for a ride by the two alleged satanist strongarm men, as recounted in chapter 1, it was her initiation into the complex, murky world of ritual child abuse in general and the controversial case of the Presidio day care center in particular. An investigation of charges of child abuse at the prestigious army base had taken a startling new twist late in 1986, when a child claimed to have been taken off the post and abused in a ritualized manner. Investigation of the information provided by this child would eventually lead directly to Temple of Set leader Michael Aquino, then an Army Reserve officer stationed at the Presidio, and to his wife, Lilith, the temple's high priestess.

A criminal investigation of Aquino was pursued by the San Francisco Police Department, the FBI, and the U.S. Attorney's office in San Francisco. No formal charges were filed, though, largely due to the difficulty of obtaining from young children testimony that can satisfy the very strict procedural requirements for introducing evidence. However, through a procedure known as *titling*, the army itself has officially taken the position that there was probable cause

to believe that Aquino committed at least one act of ritual molestation. Although this charge has not been proved in court, so far the army's position has been upheld on appeal. While his wife's name was removed entirely because the children's identification of her was inadequate, Michael Aquino's name remains on the investigation report because the evidence of alibi he offered was not persuasive.

Indeed, much of the evidence for the abuse of children at the Presidio facility is compelling. It includes medical documentation of sexual abuse, accurate descriptions of places claimed to have been used for rituals, and the indirect evidence of the children's continued nightmares and adjustment problems. Although not absolutely conclusive, this case, like many others that appear persuasive but are so hard to prove, provides a very suggestive link between satanism and at least some cases of child abuse.

Headquarters of the United States Sixth Army, the Presidio is registered as a National Historical Landmark District because of its military architecture, which dates back to the American Revolution. Considered one of the most beautiful military bases in the world, it will become the property of the National Park Service after its scheduled closing sometime this decade. Its six thousand military and civilian employees enjoy sweeping views of the Golden Gate Bridge and San Francisco Bay, as may casual visitors since the Presidio is an open post. Base residents occupy Spanish-style houses shaded by groves of tall eucalyptus trees. Like that other bastion of military prestige, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the Presidio is not supposed to be a place where waking nightmares occur.

But the nightmare had already enveloped West Point. In 1984, Captain Walter Grote, a doctor on the Point's medical staff, and his wife, Mary, became concerned about their three-year-old daughter. The child was having nightmares and waking up drenched in sweat. The sight of an injured animal would send her into hysterics, as would the sound of a smoke

detector accidentally going off in their home. Walter and Mary Grote taught Sunday school classes at the Point, during which time they left their daughter at the Child Development Center, a day care facility for military and civilian personnel. Under Mary's gentle questioning, her daughter began to disclose that she had been sexually and ritually abused by the center's workers, including three teenagers. They had taken her to a local high school where she was photographed pornographically, dressed as a bride and "married" to Satan. She described people in costumes torturing one another. They had forced her to drink urine and eat feces. They had killed a dog. And they had threatened to burn down her house if she told.

The Grotes fought, without success, for prosecution of their daughter's case. In 1985, Walter Grote, whose superiors described him as a physician of the highest caliber, turned down a promotion to major to protest what he considered an official cover-up of the abuse at the CDC. By this time, Grote says, he knew of about three dozen children who had disclosed having been ritually abused there, who told of having been raped, drugged and terrorized. But the Army had other priorities. "The whole underlying theme was that the image of West Point was more important than dealing with the reality of what happened," says Grote, who now practices medicine as a civilian.

Grote was not alone in his assessment. In 1983, an army staff sergeant at the Point who had murdered his girlfriend's twenty-two-month-old child was given an eighteen-month suspended sentence and a dishonorable discharge. Colonel Richard Eckert, a doctor who headed the West Point Child Protection Case Management Team, was incensed at the ruling. "The community has received a devastating message—West Point and the Army take child abuse lightly and do not consider it a major offense," he charged in a letter to the base superintendent. West Point pediatrician Pat Jones, who believes that his own daughter was abused at the day care center, was even more outspoken in his condemnation. "The

guy that murdered the twenty-two-month-old baby was let off scot-free," Jones charged. "They just kicked him out of the Army to prevent any publicity. I tried to resign from the [West Point] alumni association. I feel ashamed of even being from that place."

Since the alleged abuse at "that place" had occurred on the base itself, the case was under federal jurisdiction and FBI agents were assigned to investigate. They supplied a federal grand jury with a thousand hours of interviews incorporating the testimony of fifty alleged victims, but after a year the jury failed to return indictments. Prosecutors said that it had been impossible to identify any individual perpetrators from the children's testimony. But Rudolph Giuliani, then United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, noted that "there were indications that some children may have been abused at the West Point Child Development Center," and recommended that the Point provide them with therapy. Eleven families filed a lawsuit.

Then, like some kind of eerie plague, the nightmare jumped the continent. On November 14, 1986, Joyce Tobin, the wife of a U.S. Army captain posted at the Presidio, stopped to pick up her three-year-old son at the base's preschool and hourly day care program, also run by the Child Development Center. The child was enrolled in preschool, but this was only the second time he had been left at the day care center, as his mother kept a medical appointment. When Joyce Tobin arrived, Gary Hambright, the teacher in charge of the day care center, told her that her "darling little boy" had seemed a bit upset that day and suggested that he felt intimidated by the older children.

That night, as Joyce Tobin chatted with a neighbor at her front door, her older son noticed that his little brother appeared to be playing with himself, pulling his penis forward with both hands, then letting it go, repeating the gesture over and over. "Mr. Gary do it," he explained. The older boy ran for their mother. Her heart in her throat, Joyce Tobin asked

her younger son what he meant. "Mr. Gary touched my penis with his hand, and he bit my penis," the child replied, making a chomping sound to emphasize the point. Had Mr. Gary done anything else? Joyce asked. Yes, he had. "He put a pencil in my hole in my bottom. He do that, he do that to me. He hurt me and I cry, and I cry." Later that night the little boy went to his parents' bedroom in tears; he was afraid and wanted to sleep with them. Over the next few days, he continued to talk about how Mr. Gary had hurt him. Once, while driving with his mother through the grounds of the Presidio, he begged not to be taken back to the day care center. "I don't want to go to day care. Mr. Gary hurt me and I cry," he protested.

Not wanting to believe what she was hearing but determined to find the truth, Joyce Tobin contacted CDC director Diana Curl on Wednesday, November 19, to discuss her son's claims. Curl made an appointment for the following Friday. But on Thursday, Joyce's husband, Mike Tobin, a nuclear engineer and West Point graduate, spoke with a chaplain who relayed the information to the army's Criminal Investigation Division. The case had broken. It was the opening salvo in an investigation that would uncover dozens of children who claimed to have been victims of sexual and ritual abuse at the CDC.

On Friday, the Tobins' son underwent an interview videotaped by CID officers and was examined by Dr. Kevin Coulter at the Child Adolescent Sexual Abuse Referral Center (CAR-SAC) at San Francisco General Hospital. Dr. Coulter concluded that the child had in fact been anally raped, as indicated by a much faster and wider than normal dilation of his anus, consistent with trauma caused by penetration such as the boy had described. (The CAR-SAC staff noted that very young children often assert that they were penetrated with a pencil or some other object because they do not understand what rape is.) In the meantime, military authorities were searching the CDC. Unfortunately, the center's staff had been notified

that something was afoot within a half-hour of Joyce Tobin's phone call two days earlier.

The CARSAC workers suggested that there might be multiple victims, but the army seemed not to want to believe this. Meetings were held. After nearly two weeks, a strategy group was assembled. Finally, on December 15, nearly a month after the case had broken, the army mailed out letters to the 242 parents who had left children in Hambright's care, advising them that there had been a single incident of alleged child sexual abuse and asking them if they had observed anything unusual in their own children. Although the letter sought to reassure the parents that the authorities had "no reason to believe other children had been victimized," the response indicated otherwise.

Other children soon began to speak out, the first among what would eventually include more than sixty. Their allegations were particularly startling because many hinted at satanic activity. Some children described being taken out of the day care center to private homes on the Presidio base, and to one home off-post, where they were sexually abused. The experiences of these children were not confined to "fondling" or "bad touching." Some claimed that "Mr. Gary" had engaged in acts of coprophilia, such as urinating and defecating on them and forcing them to do the same to him. Some said that he had forced them to drink urine and eat feces and had smeared blood and feces on their bodies. Hambright and other teachers had allegedly pointed guns at some of the children, threatening to kill them or their parents if they told what had happened. In several cases, there was physical evidence to support the allegations: Medical examiners discovered that five of the children had chlamydia, a sexually transmitted disease.

Despite misgivings that such "bizarre" allegations would be hard to prosecute, army investigators arrested Gary Willard Hambright, age thirty-five, on January 5, 1987. Before coming to work at the day care center in 1985, Hambright had

been ordained as a Southern Baptist minister and had worked as a substitute teacher in San Francisco for about ten years. But he appeared to have no connection with satanism, and the prosecutors were not eager to look for any. They wanted a simple and straightforward pedophile case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Gray had obtained a grand jury indictment charging Hambright with sodomy, oral copulation, and committing a lewd and lascivious act on the Tobin child. Gray was confident that she had an excellent case, but three months after Hambright's arrest, the charges were dropped when U.S. District Court Judge William Schwarzer refused to allow the admission of "hearsay" statements made by the child to his mother, brother, and medical examiners. Although such statements might be allowed in some states, in federal courts and California state courts they are not. Judge Schwarzer also ruled that the boy was too young to qualify as a competent witness. Without his testimony, and the similar statements of twelve other children, the case collapsed. (One of the problems in determining the facts was that no indictments were returned in most of the abuse cases, due primarily to the difficulty of using child witnesses.) However, the U.S. Attorney's office's managed to have the charges dismissed "without prejudice," which meant that Gray could refile should she obtain more evidence.

The military was understandably reluctant to call attention to this kind of problem in its midst. But finally, in April 1987, the Department of Defense decided to create special strike teams to investigate sex abuse cases in the military, no doubt with some of the motivation coming from the allegations at the Presidio. Even after the legal case had been dismissed the parents had continued to share information, and by that time they had thirty-seven children identified as suspected victims. A core group of five couples—professionals who could afford to be spokespersons for those who feared for their jobs if they came forward—called and wrote letters to congressmen. Fearful that the abuse was continuing, they prodded the army



to stop insisting that the day care center was safe. "They just didn't want to believe it," said one mother, summing up the army's reaction. "Now, they're just trying to cover it up like a bad dream."

Eventually, the parents would learn of other cases at other army bases, including West Point, Fort Dix, Fort Leavenworth, and Fort Jackson in South Carolina—a total of fifteen day care centers in all—as well as at two U.S. Air Force day care centers and at a facility run by the navy in Philadelphia. They would learn that allegations of physical and sexual abuse at the Presidio's "model day care center," the CDC, were nothing new. Neither were reports of satanic activities. Graffiti such as "666" and "Prince of Darkness," interspersed with crudely drawn pentagrams and other occult symbols, have been found behind the Military Intelligence Building in a concrete bunker that appeared to have been used as a ritual chamber.

On one memorable evening, while checking out a report of a possible child abduction, Presidio MPs kicked open the door of a gardener's shack on the grounds of Julius Kahn Park, a city-owned playground adjacent to the Presidio housing area. They were greeted by the sight of a mannequin pointing a gun at them from a corner of the room. A huge pentagram covered much of the floor, and a collection of dolls' heads decorated the ceiling. After some token surveillance of the shack, the investigation was called off. "We were sitting there, we've got a cult on the Presidio of San Francisco, and nobody cares about it," one MP complained. "We were told by the provost marshal to just forget about it."

Larry and Michelle Adams-Thompson, leaders in the fight to have the children's charges investigated, had noticed some odd changes in their daughter's behavior late in 1986, shortly before the Tobin case broke. When she was almost three years old, "Lisa" had been left in the Presidio day care center four or five times. She was in Gary Hambright's classroom, and

on two occasions when Michelle picked up her daughter at the center, Hambright told her that Lisa had wet her pants. The parents thought this unusual, since she had not wet herself for a year. When she began having nightmares and wetting herself when frightened, they told themselves that she was just going through a phase. But in January 1987, they heard about the child abuse investigation involving Hambright at the Presidio. Lisa was questioned by the FBI but made no definite statements. In February, the Adams-Thompsons took Lisa to a therapist at the Letterman Army Medical Center, located on the base. After several visits, the therapist broke the news that their child had disclosed that she had been molested by Hambright—and by an unidentified man and woman known to the child only as Mikey and Shamby.

The alleged identities of Mikey and Shamby would remain a mystery for months. But on August 12, 1987, as the family was shopping at the Presidio Post Exchange, Lisa suddenly ran to Larry and hid behind his legs, apparently terrified by the presence of an officer standing a few yards away. Looking up, Larry recognized Lieutenant Colonel Michael Aquino. "Do you know that man?" he asked his stepdaughter. The frightened child said nothing but continued to cling to his leg. Larry called to Michelle, who came to her daughter's side. Then Larry asked Lisa once again if she knew that man over there in the white shirt.

"Yes, that's Mikey," she replied. Larry gathered his family and took them outside. "He's a bad man and I'm afraid," Lisa told them as she was bundled into their car. As they drove around to the other side of the PX and out of the parking lot, Larry spotted Aquino's wife, Lilith. He asked Lisa if she knew the woman.

"Yes, that's Shamby," she said.

The next morning, Larry called the FBI. When Special Agent Clyde Foreman arrived, he interviewed Lisa and showed her a photo spread that included Gary Hambright. She identified him correctly. Then, according to the FBI

report, the three-year-old girl told Agent Foreman what "Mr. Gary" had done to her

Victim states that she drove with "Mr. Gary" to his house where [he] took photos of her. "Mikey" and "Shamby" were present and "Mikey" put his penis into her mouth, bottom, and vagina, just like "Mr. Gary." Victim stated that "Mikey" and "Mr. Gary" dressed up in girl's clothing, and "Shamby" dressed up in boy's clothing. Victim states that the house had a bathtub with lions [sic] feet.

Knowing that Aquino and his wife lived off-base, on Leavenworth Street in San Francisco, the investigators took Lisa to the 2400 block and asked her if she recognized any of the homes. As they walked past 2430 Leavenworth Street, the girl identified it as "Mr. Gary's house," where she had met Mikey and Shamby. It was the Aquinos' residence.

According to the FBI report, when the investigators spoke to Lisa the following day, she told them that she had been "filmed with a movie camera with steady lights while she bathed in a plastic lion bathtub." She also described the living room as having black walls and a gold cross painted on the ceiling. Extraordinary as the child's disclosures were, they were not unique. During the investigation, other children would identify a Mikey and Shamby as their abusers.

After confirming Lisa's identification of the Aquinos' house through postal, telephone, and motor vehicle records, the FBI brought in the San Francisco police, since the abuse allegedly occurred on city property. The police obtained a search warrant. Its purpose was to seize items that might be evidence of the sexual exploitation of children, such as films or tapes that featured pictures of juveniles, as well as phone books and correspondence that might identify juveniles. Near midnight on August 14, SFPD child abuse specialist Inspector Glenn Pamfiloff appeared on the Aquinos' doorstep, armed

with the warrant and accompanied by Detective Sandi Gallant and other officers. When the police left, they took with them several cartons of seized items, including videotapes, audio cassettes, notebooks with names and addresses, two photo albums, four plastic cases of negatives, twenty-nine photos of costumes and "stars," and a computer. The search also confirmed that the Aquinos' living room was painted black.

Needless to say, the disclosure that a satanist high priest was under investigation for child molestation in the Presidio case whipped up a storm of interest—and controversy—in the media. The story did not break until October 30, but when it did it broke big. Front-page articles in the San Francisco and Bay Area newspapers trumpeted the tale of the "Presidio Satanist." In a series of features for the *San Jose Mercury News*, reporter Linda Goldston laid out the whole incredible story of the former Eagle Scout turned self-styled Antichrist, the Ph.D. who listed his satanic church in the Yellow Pages, the ex-Green Beret with top-secret security clearance.

In an interview published in the *San Francisco Examiner*, Aquino bemoaned the very idea that such an "unbelievable and outrageous" event as a "police raid" could befall him. He had recently been promoted to lieutenant colonel and had just returned from a stint as a full-time student at the Pentagon's National Defense University, a high honor indeed for a Reserve officer. However, San Francisco journalist Ivan Sharpe, who conducted the *Examiner* interview, reported that as far back as 1981, law enforcement authorities had taken note of Aquino's "weird satanic fantasies," his obsession with Nazi occultism, his claim that he reported directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the names of several other military intelligence officers on the Temple of Set's membership roster.

Aquino, who by this time had been reassigned to St. Louis, strenuously protested his innocence. He insisted that he had never met the Adams-Thompson child, nor had the child ever

been in his house, nor had he and his wife ever met Gary Hambright. The children, he said, were reacting to his unusual physical appearance. He claimed he was living in Washington, D.C., at the time when the alleged abuse took place. He noted that the Temple of Set neither prescribes nor tolerates any form of harm, sexual or otherwise, to children. Ultimately, he dismissed the allegations as a "witch hunt."

The November 16, 1987 issue of *Newsweek* ran a two-column feature under the title **THE SECOND BEAST OF REVELATION**, complete with a photo of "Aquino and wife," looking somewhat pudgy and gaunt, respectively. The story highlighted Aquino's contention that while his "demonic" looks might be responsible for traumatizing kids who encountered him into contriving bizarre stories of torture and rape, he was not a "crazed pedophile." It also noted his "ironic" identification of himself as the Antichrist, his allegedly apolitical interest in rituals practiced by the Nazi SS, and his prophecy that only the "elect" members of the Temple of Set would survive a coming apocalypse. But the theme of Aquino's "absolute constitutional right" to his "nonmainstream" beliefs, as expounded by Pentagon spokesman Major Greg Rixon, was by now well established and was duly repeated as well.

A new twist on this convoluted case appeared when an article in the December 6 issue of the *Marin Independent Journal* disclosed that Michael Aquino owned a building in Marin County that had been leased by Project Care for Children and the Marin County Child Abuse Council. He had inherited the property from his mother, Betty Ford-Aquino, who had died in 1985, leaving him an estate of \$3.2 million. Startled by this "ironic and bizarre twist of fate," Project Care for Children officials were quick to emphasize that Aquino had nothing to do with the operation of the private, nonprofit center, which helped parents search for affordable day care. The article also noted that Aquino's brother-in-law,

William Butch, whose sister was Lilith Aquino, was co-founder of two Marin County satanist groups, the Dark Star 9 Pylon and Meta Mates.

Aquino even managed to use this media spotlight to seek a forum for his satanist views. He and his wife invited television cameras into their home. On two later occasions, resembling the Reverend Dracula in his satanist clerical garb and pointedly distinctive facial hair, Aquino appeared on nationwide television—on *Oprah*, in February 1988, accompanied by Lilith, and on the Geraldo Rivera two-hour special on satanism aired the following October. Invariably in these appearances he strove to project an air of affronted clerical dignity and weary martyrdom.

All this attention put the army in a peculiar position, as army officials received hundreds of outraged phone calls and letters demanding his dismissal. On one hand, Aquino had, up to that point, built himself an army career that has been described as "dazzling." He had been a psychological-warfare officer in Vietnam, earning the Bronze Star, the Air Medal, and the Army Commendation Medal. He had qualified in the Airborne, Special Forces, and Intelligence fields, and he had graduated on the commandant's list from the Command and General Staff College. He wrote ROTC textbooks. When the story hit the press, he was working as a staff officer with top-secret clearance at the Army Reserve Personnel Center in St. Louis, after having served five years at the Presidio coordinating active-duty tours and reserve training. There was no question that this was a highly competent and apparently dedicated officer.

At first, the army's official policy was to stand by its man. The military was sworn to uphold the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Aquino's leadership of a satanist church was protected by the First Amendment, which, army spokesmen reminded all who inquired, guaranteed freedom of religion even to a satanist. The January 1988 *National Enquirer* reported that the army had known that Aquino was involved as

a "devil worshipper" for twenty-two years and still permitted him to maintain his security clearance—much to the outrage of William Gill, director of the Catholic War Veterans. In response to Gill's contention that the military should uphold "the traditional values of God and country," the *Enquirer* quoted Major Greg Rixon, the army public affairs officer at the Pentagon who had drawn the unenviable task of presenting the army's public position on Aquino. "As long as an individual's religious practice remains within the limit of the law, there's no problem," Rixon said. Furthermore, the army asserted, Aquino's open espousal of satanism actually made him a better security risk, since it neutralized the danger of blackmail. In what might be seen as a Freudian choice of words, designated flak-catcher Rixon noted that Aquino "makes no bones about the fact that he is a satanist, so no pressure could be placed on him by someone trying to leverage his behavior."

As reporter Linda Goldston noted, satanists were only one among many unconventional religious groups seeking recognition and affirmation of their civil rights within the military. Wiccans, Druids, and other pagan groups had requested their own chaplains, time off for religious holidays, and dog tags stating their religious affiliation. However, religious expression within the military is not as absolute as the comments of Major Rixon and others would indicate. For example, the Supreme Court has ruled that the air force may ban the wearing of yarmulkes, or skullcaps, by Jewish military personnel in uniform. Journalist Ivan Sharpe reported that Aquino had acquired a reputation as a "wacko" among those who had seen him wearing his black clerical collar and gold Temple of Set medallion at the Presidio officers' club.

Aquino's penchant for "Nazi occultism" might have proved more problematic. In 1986, then-Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger had ordered commanders to rigorously enforce existing Pentagon policies forbidding participation by military personnel in activities sponsored by "white suprem-

acy, neo-Nazi, and other groups which espouse or attempt to create overt discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, religion, or national origin." Weinberger's directive, which stopped short of actually prohibiting membership in such groups, followed an internal policy review in response to reports that some Marines had been seen taking part in Ku Klux Klan rallies. In any case, by setting his activities in a religious context, publicly decrying Nazi "excesses," and expressing contempt for neo-Nazi groups, Aquino effectively sidestepped this question.

Meanwhile, the San Francisco police, FBI, and army investigations of the day care case dragged on without any formal charges being filed against Aquino, and eventually even the case against Gary Hambright fell apart. Although Hambright had been reindicted on molestation charges involving ten children, six months after the first charges against him for the Tobin boy had been dropped, this case too was abandoned. The main reason seems to be that attorneys at the U.S. Attorney's office, led by Assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Gray, who was handling the case, were unable to gather sufficient evidence from the children to make the case stick. There was medical corroboration on the Tobin and Adams-Thompson children, but some of this evidence was described vaguely and was provided by a nonarmy, off-post doctor who had examined them. Also, the evidence on the children who had chlamydia could not be used because the right kind of culture had not been taken at the Letterman Army Medical Center, and the U.S. Attorney's office did not ask the parents to get additional cultures. Worse, there were problems with the "reliability" of the children's testimony. (For one thing, they were not able to supply the exact dates and times of the alleged abuses.) And there were difficulties due to the weak cooperation between the army and the U.S. Attorney's office. The case fell through the cracks, since the U.S. Attorney's office determined that federal jurisdiction in the case ended at the boundaries of the Presidio. Therefore, the off-post



allegations against Hambright and those against Aquino and his wife, who were investigated by the San Francisco Police Department, could not be applied to the federal case.

In April 1988, the U.S. Attorney's office closed the case, leaving open the possibility of reopening it if there was new evidence, although it would have to act within the five-year statute of limitations to do so. The SFPD called it quits that September, on the grounds of "lack of sufficient evidence." The San Francisco District Attorney's office decided not to file charges against Aquino for the alleged abuse of Lisa Adams-Thompson in his home because there "wasn't enough corroborating evidence to proceed on the original allegations," according to Assistant District Attorney Mike Williams.

However, while the federal and San Francisco cases were now on ice, other occurrences were raising questions about just what was going on at the Presidio. For one thing, as 1987 wore on, the complex that housed the day care center developed a nasty habit of catching fire. At 4:45 **A.M.** on September 22, a call came in to the Presidio Fire Department reporting a blaze at the Army Community Services Building next door to the CDC. The fire was extinguished in a couple of hours, but the \$500,000 worth of damage included destruction of some of the records pertaining to the day care center itself. Not surprisingly, the army investigators who probed the demolished building claimed that the fire had been caused by faulty wiring.

The army investigators had a chance to reevaluate three weeks later, when a second early-morning blaze struck, this time at the CDC itself. Four classrooms, including Hambright's, were damaged to the tune of \$50,000. This time the army called in the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to help with the investigation. Contrary to the army's original findings, the BATF eliminated accidental causes and verified the presence of an accelerant, thereby determining that the cause of both blazes was arson. In the course of

the investigation, they discovered a pile of cinders under a building—evidence of yet a third arson attempt.

Speculation naturally arose about a possible link between the fires and the allegations of ritual abuse. The first fire had occurred on the autumnal equinox, said to be one of the four major seasonal events on the satanist calendar. The feds took an empirical approach. "It's impossible not to draw the conclusion [of a link], but there's been no physical evidence or anything that indicates they're connected," said FBI spokesman Chuck Latting. "It's a very serious investigation and we don't want to draw any conclusions just based on our own ideas."

The army announced that the CDC would close on November 20, 1987 and subsequently be demolished. A new center was scheduled to open in April of the following year. According to Presidio spokesman Bob Mahoney, the action was to be taken for "health, safety, and sanitation reasons, and not as a result of allegations of child abuse." But Democratic Representative Barbara Boxer of California said that military authorities had already admitted to her that they "couldn't rule out that all the problems had been solved," and that they were aware that some children were afraid to return to the center. A \$5,000 reward was offered for information concerning the fires. It remains unclaimed. The arsonist was never apprehended, and the questions linger.

Meanwhile, the parents themselves had decided to take action now that the federal case was closed. In June 1988 they filed a \$55 million action against the army on behalf of twenty-three children, alleging that negligence at the day care center had led to the abuse. This action was a first step toward suing the government as well. In turn, it had become all too evident that many of the children were still suffering the effects of the alleged abuse. Many were still having nightmares or acting out sexually what they said had happened to them in those few months back in 1986 and 1987 when the molestations allegedly occurred.

To add to the army's discomfort, on August 9, 1988, the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Personnel held hearings regarding the various allegations of abuse at army day care centers, including that at the Presidio. The committee members reportedly "shredded" the Justice Department representative, demanding to know why, in the face of several cases of children who had chlamydia, they did not believe they had grounds for action.

But, on another front, the army had kept the case alive. In November 1988, influenced by the affidavits submitted by the parents of the abused children, the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) of the Sixth Army, based at the Presidio, appointed an investigation team to be headed by the Judge Advocate General. After sifting through several hundred documents of evidence, the CCD team selected what they believed were the six strongest cases against Aquino, and added a few more after interviewing some of the relatively few parents and children willing to undergo questioning yet again. Several of the children had independently identified the Aquinos as their abusers. All had identified the by-now depressingly familiar components of ritual abuse: darkened rooms, black candles, chanting, robed and masked figures, blood and urine, animals, cameras, drugs, and ritual sex.

Early in the investigation, well-meaning but inexperienced agents had conducted interviews that obviously employed leading questions, thereby compromising the children's testimony. The CID was determined not to repeat this mistake. To test the children's accuracy in identifying Aquino, the team prepared video "lineups" using footage from his appearance on *Oprah*. Actors were made up to look like Aquino and coached to imitate his voice as they read statements he had made while appearing on the show. When the children were shown the false and real video clips alongside one another, they "picked out Aquino as 'Mikey' every time." They were equally successful in picking his picture out of lineups of driver's-license photos, in which even Aquino

looked no weirder than anyone else. Some of the children were equally successful in identifying Lilith Aquino.

By December 1988, *San Jose Mercury News* staff writer Linda Goldston was able to report that Lieutenant Colonel Michael Aquino had been formally "titled" under the uniform code of military justice. According to CID spokesperson Mary Melanson, this step signified that the authorities "feel there is sufficient evidence to believe a crime has been committed. The closest thing in civilian terms would be a grand jury indictment." The army had officially notified Aquino that he was the subject of a criminal investigation for kidnapping, sodomy, and knowingly and maliciously making false charges against another officer." His security clearance had been suspended, a step that had not been taken during the FBI and SFPD investigations. However, it was clear that the army was not much happier about this state of affairs than he was. Goldston noted that most of her sources "would speak only on the condition that they would not be named."

Aquino got the news that the army's Judge Advocate General's team had decided to "title" him on the day after he and his wife returned from a trip to Great Britain to inaugurate a new thirty-member branch of the Temple of Set. In summer 1988, an article by Aquino had appeared in a British occultist magazine, calling for more interaction with British satanists. The Temple of Set already included a small number of British followers, led by former Church of Satan member David Austen, who was now to be installed as high priest. (According to British author and television producer Tim Tate, who has monitored the temple's growth in his country, Austen is more candid than Aquino on subjects such as satanist involvement in child molestation. While repeating the Temple of Set rule that "real" satanists exercise their will "responsibly," Austen acknowledges that "people who claim to be satanists" are abusing children and that many occultists who know this "will not speak out because they fear magical retribution or even something a bit stronger and perhaps phys-

ical." He also said that he had heard about human sacrifices—but "would prefer not to believe it's true.")

One reason for the decision to title Aquino, according to the statement of an army spokesman, was that Lisa Adams-Thompson had provided investigators with a small but significant piece of evidence. She told them that Michael Aquino sometimes parked his car not at his own house but in a garage several doors away. She not only told them about it, she led them to it. When the investigators found her information to be correct, they felt they now had enough evidence to take action. After all, how could the child have known this if she had not been there?

In May 1989, the press reported that the Aquinos were being questioned about new charges of sexual abuse related to ongoing investigations of cases in the northern California counties of Mendocino and Sonoma. In Ukiah and Fort Bragg, rural communities about two hours north of San Francisco, three boys and a girl had complained of abuse. The Fort Bragg case originated in 1984 and involved allegations of ritual abuse at the Jubilation Day Care Center, run by two sisters from Illinois. These children told of having been taken into the woods for rituals and to area churches. Another case originated in Santa Rosa, in Sonoma County, where a nine-year-old-girl reported having been molested in nearby Mendocino County.

The children had not been able to identify all of their alleged abusers at first, but some of them said they recognized Aquino when he was featured in television and newspaper coverage of the Presidio case. One small boy was watching local television coverage of the Presidio case that included a guided tour of the Aquinos' apartment. According to his mother, he "grabbed the rocking chair and hung on real tight. His eyes got huge and he said, 'Mommy, that's the man from the church in Fort Bragg.' "

Ukiah Police Chief Fred Keplinger confirmed that he had asked army investigators to look into the Ukiah case because

of its close resemblance to the situation at the Presidio, and that his department was now working with the CID as part of a multijurisdictional investigation. The children's stories were "believable," he said, and the problem now was "just being able to prove who the perpetrators are." Keplinger said that he was aware that Aquino had visited the area. He did not specify whether he knew that the Temple of Set's "holy land," called Xemset, a twenty-acre parcel occupied at the time by a small cabin and an outdoor altar constructed by two resident Temple of Set members, was located on Mid-Mountain Road in a hilly, remote part of the nearby town of Potter Valley.

Ultimately no charges arose out of these investigations, and Aquino said that he and his wife had never molested any child "anywhere, anytime." Obtaining evidence that will stand up in court from very young children is one of the most frustrating difficulties in cases of this nature. Hidden somewhere among the uncertainties of the investigation lies the truth, but to satisfy current legal standards, evidence must be more precise for the authorities to act.

From the time that their involvement in the Presidio case first broke, the Aquinos or their followers had been trying to discredit individuals involved in prosecuting the cases or who did not adhere to their side of the story. The SFPD was bombarded with demands that Pamfiloff and Gallant, the police officers who had conducted the "midnight raid" on the Aquinos' house, be reprimanded and disciplined—for having executed a legal warrant. An army psychiatrist who had examined some of the children was startled to learn that her new commanding officer had received a letter from Michael Aquino insisting that she be court-martialed. Newspaper editors received complaints about their reporters.

Commentators who criticized satanism—let alone the Temple of Set itself—were likely to receive multipage diatribes denouncing the entire Judeo-Christian epoch. In an extended supplement to the Temple of Set newsletter, *The*

*Scroll of Set*, Aquino railed against the "lies" constructed by the "twisted . . . pack of hyenas" who had dared to launch an investigation of him. If clinical psychologist Catherine Gould refused rational corrections, he threatened to seek "punitive action" against her for having published a checklist of symptoms that might indicate ritual abuse. He indicated that the Temple of Set would monitor other therapists, hospitals, and child welfare organizations that expressed concern about satanic abuse and that they would take appropriate legal action. The Aquinos also engaged in the defense tactic of shooting the messenger. In an interview conducted for British television, Lilith Aquino snarled that it was the therapists who should be investigated as the "true abusers" of children.

Within the army itself, Aquino tried to discredit Larry Adams-Thompson. In January 1988, he brought sworn charges against Adams-Thompson for engaging in "conduct unbecoming an officer and gentleman" and damaging the image of the armed forces. Aquino claimed that Adams-Thompson was "irresponsible" in making a formal accusation that his stepdaughter had been abused! And what might Adams-Thompson's motive have been for such an allegation? He knew that Aquino was a satanist and, Aquino insinuated, might even have fabricated his stepdaughter's allegations. Aquino even tried to throw the blame for the abuse onto Adams-Thompson himself. Claiming that the greatest danger to children usually comes from within the immediate family, he asked, "Was Chaplain Adams-Thompson's stepdaughter actually molested? If so, by whom?"

However, as Tim Tate notes in his 1991 book *Children for the Devil*, Aquino's misleading statements about the investigation did not do much for his credibility. For one thing, he claimed that Larry Adams-Thompson himself had made the abuse allegations and described the scene of the crime, when in fact his stepdaughter had made these statements directly to the interviewing FBI agents. Larry had merely called the authorities to notify them of Lisa's identification of the

Aquino at the PX, which would have been virtually impossible for the three-year-old girl to do by herself. Aquino also claimed that the medical examination showed Lisa to be "completely untouched." But the army responded that this was a "direct lie," since the medical evidence did indeed show that Lisa had been sexually abused.

Aquino's complaints against Adams-Thompson were dismissed when Aquino suggested a continuing investigation. In fact, after Aquino charged the chaplain with misconduct, the army turned around and investigated Aquino instead. After reviewing the evidence, the staff Judge Advocate for the Presidio, Lieutenant Schwender, determined that there was probable cause to charge Aquino with "offenses of indecent acts with a child, sodomy, conspiracy, kidnapping, and false swearing," this last stemming from his sworn statement against Adams-Thompson.

However, the army's Judge Advocate General's team, although convinced that Lieutenant Colonel Michael Aquino "definitely did abuse" the daughter of Michelle and Larry Adams-Thompson, chose not to "force a court-martial in this case." The reason given was that they did not think it would be good for the children to go back to court and face cross-examination. As a member of the team observed, "We just won't renew his contract, so in fact we are getting rid of him that way." In 1990, an Army Reserve continuation board recommended discontinuing Aquino's military service, and he was subsequently processed out of the army.

Aquino brought a civil suit against the army, attempting to get information removed from his Report of Investigation (ROI), and suing for damages resulting from his discharge, which he claimed was based on the "inaccurate" report. On July 1, 1991, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia upheld the CID's decision to title Aquino. Aquino then appealed, arguing that the army was persecuting him for his religious beliefs. He contended that two letters written by Senator Jesse Helms to the secretary of the army,



arguing for Aquino's removal, had put pressure on the army to discharge him.

On February 26, 1992, the appeals court upheld the lower court's ruling, agreeing that there was probable cause for the army investigators to believe that Aquino had committed the offense. Now, Aquino's only hope for vindication is the Supreme Court. Since the court hears only about 1 percent of the cases filed for appeal, Aquino's chances to clear his name are extremely remote.

In its April 1992 issue, the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* published the results of a detailed follow-up study by psychiatrist Diane Ehrensaft of the psychological effects of the Presidio case on some of the alleged victims. The report's findings eloquently describe the implications of sadistic, satanic ritual abuse in the setting of a day care facility.

Ehrensaft, who acted as an evaluator of and therapist for the female child victims, called the case "an extraordinary and abhorrent situation of grave psychological proportions: the willful molestation of young boys and girls by representatives of the most patriarchal and supposedly protective arm of the American government—the U.S. Army." Sexual abuse in this context "reverberates in a chain reaction of violence-related responses in the child victim, in his or her family, and in the mental-health system that is meant to serve the child."

A child who enters a day care center has to trust his parents' assurance that these strangers won't hurt him. If he is abused in such a setting, that trust is betrayed. Furthermore, the perpetrators usually warn their victims that their parents will be harmed or killed should they tell them about the abuse, thereby further alienating the children from parental support and protection. Unable to talk about what is happening, they can convey their anguish only through physical and behavioral symptoms. In the Presidio case, even before the army issued its official warning, several parents had noticed disturbing changes in their children, such as vaginal discharge,

genital soreness, rashes, fear of the dark, and nightmares. While most of the children did not explicitly discuss the abuse, their age-inappropriate use of sexual language was also a tip-off. Parents heard phrases such as, "Go down on the doll—sixty-nine," "Get it up the butt," and, "Hump on the doll," from their very young children, some of whom also engaged in sexually aggressive behavior, temper tantrums, mood swings, and impulsiveness.

While temper tantrums might not be considered unusual in such small children, the same could hardly be said for their reactions when their parents, alerted by the army, asked them if something bad had happened to them at the CDC. One child fled the room screaming. "They're going to hurt you if I tell," another whispered tearfully. "I can't tell, or they'll kill you," said another. Afraid to seek help, they had bottled up their fear and rage and pain. Only when their parents were able to reassure them that they would indeed be protected did the details begin to emerge:

"Mr. G. touched my private parts."

"Mr. G. had me touch his penis."

"We passed around a doll and were told to touch the doll in certain parts."

"Mr. G. took me to his house to see his beds."

"I had to do something embarrassing in front of all the kids."

Even after initial medical examinations turned up evidence of chlamydia, a sexually transmitted disease, in one small girl who had been drawing sexually explicit pictures, the army medical center evaluated her as a victim of "suspected," not substantiated, child abuse, and recommended no further treatment. Not surprisingly, her parents refused to complete the questionnaire required for filing a formal report. It would be nearly two more years before this family could be persuaded to seek the help they needed. As Ehrensaft points out, in cases of extrafamilial molestation, evaluators have a tendency to sidetrack blame away from the perpetrator and

hold the parents responsible for somehow not protecting their children, even when the abuse occurred at the hands of a trusted care provider. Not only that, but the preabuse family setting and the family's reaction to disclosure of the abuse are also targeted for disproportionate blame. In one particularly bizarre example, the family of an alleged victim was accused of having created an atmosphere of "secrecy," thereby preventing their children from disclosing the abuse!

As the investigation dragged along, the families involved came to feel helplessly trapped in a never-ending trauma, and consequently they "recoiled from the mental-health system, so that symptoms festered, and a persistent post-traumatic stress syndrome resulted."

The children were traumatized not only by the original abuse and their own continuing nightmares and terrors, but by their parents' distress and the destructive effects on their families. Their fathers had become angry and explosive, their mothers sad and worried, their homes the scene of arguments and conflict. And they blamed themselves for all of it. Psychologists note that very young children naturally do this because of their limited and egocentric view of the world, in which they assume that whatever happens to change their families and create distress must be caused by themselves. During the extended period following the abuse during which they received no treatment, they had time to "seal the pain of the trauma with a layered armor of distortion, denial, and dissociation," according to Ehrensaft. When they finally did enter treatment, they tended to resist it, in some cases even declaring that having to talk about the abuse was worse than the abuse itself.

The children's belated treatment, about eighteen to twenty-four months after the suspected abuse, uncovered a lot of fears and satanic imagery, some of which had been hidden from the investigators because many of the children didn't want to talk about what had happened. Encouraged by their therapists, they became "more willing and even anxious to

talk about their fears of violence and aggression," and the fears about Satan came pouring out. One seven-year-old girl told her therapist that she couldn't sleep for fear that a man who looked like the character Freddie Kruger from *Nightmare on Elm Street* would come to her house and "get" her. Magical thinking had seeped into her worldview. She told her therapist that the Devil had tripped her around the ankles with a magic snake, causing her to fall and hurt herself. Another child told how she lay awake at night, fearful that skeletons would come to drag her to Hell. Ehrensaft points out that the occult ritual abuse had actually provided a context in which such delusions could flourish—in other words, the content of their fantasies had, in a sense, been provided by the abusers themselves.

While some of the more extreme behavioral changes such as sexual acting out had subsided, some children had ongoing problems in relating to their peers. They were aggressive and belligerent to other children and sometimes stole or lied. In addition, all of the girls were continuing to experience internal conflict about their own responsibility for what had happened. Many continued to blame themselves. In a sense, their abusers' warnings that something terrible would happen to their families if they told had indeed come true, since their families had become dysfunctional and in some cases had been destroyed. Nor could they escape their fear of being victimized again. One girl had a persistent premonition that whenever she went to school, "something unavoidable would happen to her and to her body."

Given these persistent symptoms, combined with the long delay in therapeutic intervention and the continuing ambiguity about what actually happened, Ehrensaft fears that these children will "carry lifelong scars from the experience, with the potential of recurring psychological difficulties" throughout their lives. She observes that for a child caught in a situation of dependence on an adult he or she perceives as bad, "it is far safer to be the devil in the hands of god than a saint in the

hands of the devil. So the children internalize a sense of self that tends to be both evil and helpless."

In short, these families came to feel that they lived in a sick society and that their perception of the world would never be the same again. Adult survivors of ritual abuse often report that the torments they endured were intended deliberately to warp their experience of the world. Three years after the case was filed, the army made an out-of-court financial settlement with the families of the alleged victims. But the case continues to haunt their lives, and the children and their parents still bear the scars of trauma that indicate something terrible did indeed happen at the Presidio.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# Satanism and Nazism

One of the most disturbing aspects of modern satanism is the increasingly open admiration for Nazism displayed by its adherents. The connection between satanism and Nazism has been relatively difficult for some observers to identify, because until recently most satanist groups have not shown themselves to be overtly racist or anti-Semitic. But some satanists now openly advocate forms of racism and anti-Semitism as a "natural" expression of their white, Northern European hereditary background. The more sophisticated groups, such as the Temple of Set, have adopted many of the ambiguous and manipulative language strategies now being employed by the pseudoacademics of the neo-Nazi movement, known as *historical revisionists*, whose mission is to discredit the reality of the Holocaust. The more crudely extreme satanists openly embrace the trappings, the symbols, the ideology, and, in some cases, the aggressive behavior patterns of the neo-Nazi skinheads. So, this increasingly open affinity with Nazism is finding expression at all levels of the satanist movement.

Satanic graffiti is a common enough, if disturbing, sight. So is Nazi graffiti. What is relatively new, however, is the

growing number of incidents in which satanic and Nazi graffiti are found together, obviously the work of the same vandals. For example, in summer 1991, swastikas and anti-Semitic slurs appeared together with inverted crosses, "666," and phrases such as **SATAN RULES** on the walls of schools, churches, and homes in eastern Massachusetts. In many parts of the country, skinhead gangs use satanic as well as Nazi symbols in their vicious desecrations of churches, synagogues, and cemeteries.

As far back as 1989, police in San Antonio, Texas, reported that some teen satanist dabblers were going on to bigger things: They were shaving their heads and becoming neo-Nazis. As the cops saw it, these kids became bored with satanism and sacrificing animals, so they dropped the satanic symbols in favor of those of neo-Nazism and white supremacy. "They speak of . . . the purification of the Aryan race and paint slogans like 'down with the Jews,' 'down with the blacks,' " sheriff's investigator Larry Quintanilla told the *San Antonio Express-News*. He noted that this was going on in every major city in Texas. Even graffiti was affected, with pentagrams being painted over as swastikas.

Members of white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups such as the Aryan Brotherhood reportedly flaunt satanic symbolism, such as the number 666, within their prison gangs. Skinheads and other young white supremacists have taken to sporting both Nazi and satanic tattoos and insignia. Some skinhead gangs have branched off into experimentation with animal sacrifice and satanic rituals. White Aryan Youth (WAY), White Aryan Resistance (WAR), and other neo-Nazi groups are also believed to have connections to Thee Temple ov Psychick Youth and other countercultural "satanazi" fence-straddlers.

In Germany, interest in the occult in general, and satanism in particular, is said to be growing rapidly. The late Reverend Friedrich-Wilhelm Haack, an evangelical Lutheran pastor and authority on cults, estimated in 1988 that as many as ten

thousand West Germans were active satanists, although he recognized that many of these were bored teenagers checking out the latest occult fad. In an official survey of Munich high schools, 4 percent of students admitted to having taken part in at least one black mass. Obviously, the fact that a satanist happens to be German does not imply an automatic affinity for Nazism. But it is disturbing that these two movements are displaying a simultaneous resurgence in that nation.

Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey, said to be a collector of Third Reich memorabilia, freely incorporated Nazi imagery into some of the church's rituals. Members were encouraged to "challenge society's shibboleths" by showing up for meetings in Nazi gear. While it was LaVey's public stance to call the kettle black by contemptuously dismissing neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups as dumping grounds for social misfits, one former member recalls being surrounded by American Nazi Party and KKK types during Church of Satan events.

Other examples of cross-fertilization between satanism and Nazism included the Order of the Black Ram, founded by Michael Grumboski, and John Amend's Shrine of the Little Mother. Both Grumboski and Amend are former Church of Satan members, and Grumboski was also a high-level member of the Temple of Set for some years. While it lasted, Grumboski's O.B.R. promoted a mix of satanism, occultism, and notions of Aryan racial superiority. Amend's S.L.M. courted a right-wing pagan group in Canada called the Canadian Odinist Movement, which combined admiration for the Norse gods with anti-Semitism. Amend also tried to affiliate with a neo-Nazi group called the National Renaissance Party, whose leader, James Madole, had in turn been intrigued by the Church of Satan.

The Temple of Set's increasingly open fascination with the Nazis has been of major concern to those who have followed the development of that group, especially in light of the fact that several temple members are also military officers. While



military regulations forbid personnel from participating in activities sponsored by "hate groups," the temple has so far been careful to avoid the sort of identification with neo-Nazism that would cause them to be classified as such. The temple's public position on the issue is somewhat ambiguous, but, while publicly decrying "excesses" such as the Holocaust, Michael Aquino has adamantly refused to issue an across-the-board condemnation of Nazism.

Some popular historians have speculated that Hitler and his circle may have been practicing satanists in the literal sense of "worshiping the Devil" and secretly conducting black masses, but there is no evidence to support this. The reason for the close affinity between the Nazis and modern satanist groups is fundamentally ideological: Like the Nazis, the satanists claim to transcend good and evil and dream of attaining the supreme cosmic power of gods. Satanists admire Hitler as a highly potent black magician whose masterful control of his will to power allowed him to manipulate an entire nation and change the course of world history. Aquino contends that the continuing fascination with Nazism stems from the fact that Nazi Germany confronted the world with the spectacle of a twentieth-century superstate governed according to the principles of black magic.

While there was a great deal of influence from German occult movements within the Nazi Party, Nazism was not primarily the result of their machinations. However, it is a primary tenet of satanists that magicians must learn to control and manipulate economic, political, and social realities, because it is through these practical actions that the satanist gains power in the world. This the Nazis were able to do with an astonishing degree of success.

The Werewolf Order, whose acquaintance we made in chapter 3, is one of the more outspoken of the several Nazified satanic orders spawned by the Church of Satan. The group was named after the fanatical Nazi resistance movement known as the Werewolf Corps, which was formed at the end

of World War II as a last-ditch resistance to the victorious Allies, and was whipped into a Teutonic frenzy by the Radio Werewolf broadcasts of Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. In its early years, the Werewolf Order adopted the Radio Werewolf handle for its rock band, which doubled as a propaganda tool.

The Radio Werewolf Supreme Command once issued a broadsheet titled *The Radio Werewolf Indoctrination*. In it the supreme command invoked the image of the werewolf as a symbol of the "demonic manifestation" of the "glorious force" that had periodically visited the world to "wreak havoc and fear when it was necessary, and to instill order and obedience upon the masses." As its "current incarnation," Radio Werewolf's mission was to "rid this Earth once and for all of the subhuman parasites that have for too long hindered the spiritual evolution of the Chosen," clearing the way for the latter to "aspire to heights dreamed of by no mortal man." Its tool for this extermination would be its subliminal manipulation of the popular youth culture through its own form of demonic music, "designed to instill the gleam of pride and independence of the beast of prey back into the eyes of the pitiless youth." If something sounds familiar about that last line, it should: It incorporates a quote from Adolf Hitler about his own Hitler Youth.

Sally Jessy Raphael confronted LaVey's daughter Zeena and Werewolf Order co-founder Nikolas Schreck about their admiration for the Nazis when the pair appeared on her television program. Schreck first attempted to dodge the issue by insisting that he was not a National Socialist. Refusing to be put off, Sally pursued her quarry. What part of Hitler's ideology did he agree with? Did he think the Holocaust was morally right? This question produced the most telling exchange of the program. "Morality has nothing to do with it," Schreck replied. "No, I don't feel it was right or wrong. Right by what standard? We do not believe in good or evil. You have to understand that."

Another satanic organization with Nazi leanings is the Abraxas Foundation. During the early Christian era, Abraxas was worshiped by some gnostics as the demonic creator of the material world. Basilides, a second-century Egyptian gnostic who taught that the world is an evil place where the soul is sent to be punished, led a cult devoted to Abraxas, whom he equated with the Hebrew Jehovah of the Old Testament. Abraxas was also a favorite deity of several heretical sects in the Middle Ages, and the name is said to be the basis for the famous magical word *Abracadabra*. In more recent times, psychoanalyst Carl Jung, in his *Seven Sermons of the Dead*, extolled Abraxas as the "true God," repressed by Christianity, in whom there is no division between good and evil, light and darkness, truth and lies. It is hardly surprising to find his name associated with yet another offshoot of the Church of Satan.

In fall 1989, Lamar Graham, a Boston-based freelance journalist, was in the market for vampires. A conversation with professional "vampirologist" Stephen Kaplan concerning the latest edition of the latter's *Last Official Vampire Evaluation* (L.O.V.E.) had inspired Graham to place an ad in the "occult" classified section of *The Boston Phoenix*, looking for "genuine vampires" to interview—"no kooks please." Response was slow. Then he received a call from one Michael Jenkins, who claimed that he and his friends were "heavily into vampirism." Graham arranged a meeting at a popular Harvard Square restaurant. A black-clad twenty-year-old showed up and proffered a business card for the Abraxas Foundation, based in San Francisco but incorporating a Massachusetts affiliate known as *Axis Sanguinaries*, or Blood Axis. The Abraxas Foundation, Jenkins told Graham, was an "occult-fascist think tank" linked to the Church of Satan.

Jenkins and his friends turned out to be what vampirologist Kaplan had earlier described as "blood cultists"—people who engage in blood rituals. Jenkins's conversation with Gra-

ham touched on familiar themes: "We see a vampire as a predator, and we'd like to see a little more predator out there, because humanity has turned into a bunch of sheep," he told the journalist. Jenkins said he believed in "power for those who deserve it, who are superior to the common man in their aims and their actions"—people like Adolf Hitler and Charles Manson, whose "feral nature" he admired. Jenkins and his friends used blood in rituals because its power as a symbol of life and death brought out their "inner ferocity."

Jenkins himself was into drinking blood not to extend life, he told Graham, but to extend influence, which was "far more important than whether you live an extra year." The blood was given freely, presumably by celebrants in the rituals—and no, he wasn't afraid of getting AIDS, because donors were chosen carefully.

It was undoubtedly just a coincidence, but in the wee hours of the day after Christmas 1987, the Cambridge Fire Department had been called to put out a blaze in the Christmas manger scene that had been erected on Cambridge Common, across the street from Harvard University. Someone had used an electronic timing device and lighter fluid to ignite the fire. Investigators believed that the person or persons responsible were knowledgeable in arson techniques, and officials stepped up surveillance around area churches for a while. A dead sparrow and a cow's tongue had been found nailed to the creche, and a small cardboard poster nearby bore a message formed from letters clipped out of a newspaper. "How many more fires before you realize your gods are dead. DEAD?" it asked. Along the bottom of the sign was scrawled, "We're not kidding either," and, "Holy War."

The current director of the Abraxas Foundation, now headquartered in Denver, is "industrial music" performance artist Boyd Rice, who also goes by the stage name Non. Rice describes the Abraxas Foundation as a "social Darwinist think tank." The foundation's philosophy is propounded on

the pages of its tabloid publication *WAKE*, which features articles with titles such as **LONG LIVE DEATH!**

On December 30, 1986, Rice was interviewed by white supremacists Tom Metzger and Tom Padgett of the White Aryan Resistance on their *Race and Reason* cable television show. WAR is closely associated with a form of "working class" neo-Nazism known as Third Position, or Third Way, which denounces both communism and capitalism and tries to present the "true" Nazis as radical social-revolutionaries who were betrayed by Hider. The Third Position heroes are the Strasser brothers, Gregor and Otto, who organized the Nazi movement among farmers and workers in Bavaria, and Ernst Rohm, who led the Brownshirts, the SA "stormtroopers." These factions were purged by Hider in 1934 in an action known as the "Night of the Long Knives."

On camera, Rice proved to be a soft-spoken, normal-looking young man with rather handsome, angular features, characteristically dressed in casual black clothing. Introduced by Padgett as "something of a cult figure in the racial underground musical world," he explained that he makes music for the "brain" rather than the "mind," music that makes the hearer experience things in a "different" way. Like Schreck, Rice decries rock music, which he feels presents no "positive values" or "male role models" but instead seeps into the unconscious, where it "programs people to be weak and cowardly." When Tom Metzger suggested that he was a "music propagandist" providing the "orchestration of an Aryan underclass," Rice nodded in agreement.

One critic has compared Rice's music to the Ring Cycle of Wagner. A typical concert may in fact incorporate excerpts from Wagner, interspersed with the recorded voices of Hitler and Manson, accompanied by Rice shouting exhortations such as, "*Do* you want total war? You *do* want total war!" Effects such as gunshots are incorporated to produce "sound tracks" of "unclicked" noise, and drum rhythms, laser

lights, and mirrored ceiling balls in the tradition of the Die Elektrischen Vorspiele (Law of the Trapezoid) ritual from Anton LaVey's *The Satanic Rituals* are added to create an "experience." In his songs, Rice calls for a "brutal gardener" to prune earth's population.

Rice is well known in England and the rest of Europe, but less so in the United States, although he has toured in this country. Hovering on the fringes of punk rock with others who felt that "the values they had bought in to were garbage and didn't serve any function in their lives," he says he felt a need for a "biological knowledge of what you are." Apparently his biology is "Aryan," and his response was to begin moving toward racial separation and tribalism. Around 1990 he took part in the joint performance event "Wotanslager," or "Wotan's Lair," which also featured the European band Current 93. The event, sponsored in part by the Abraxas Foundation, was billed as a "Primeval Invocation to the God of War," promoting bloodlust, savagery, and predation.

On a less elevated plane is the Luciferian Light Group, whose "main body," the Church of Luciferian Light, is a satanist "Secret Brotherhood" based in Tampa, Florida. According to their literature, they believe that "the Aryan race is descended from the angles [ *sic* ] who came to the earth from 'heaven' during the first age of man . . . Aryan people are the true Children of Satan and the rightful Masters of the world." (This bizarre theology echoes some of the nineteenth-century German occultists who preached that the "angels" of the Bible were really disguised references to "Aryan heroes.") The Luciferian group offers "advanced courses in satanic theology, tuition nonrefundable if you disappoint 'His Majesty Satan'." The L.L.G. explicitly bases its theology on that of Anton LaVey's Church of Satan. It is not clear whether LaVey endorses the group, but a variety of satanist organizations regularly place advertisements in its newsletter, *Onslaught*.

In its admissions policies, the L.L.G. takes care to dot the same i's and cross the same f's as the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set. The group is "geared to the advancement of the serious seeker." No one under age eighteen is admitted. Animal sacrifice and "illegal activity" are not condoned. An "occult disclaimer," published on advice of legal counsel, states that the whole enterprise is "intended for entertainment and educational purposes only."

A 1991 issue of *Onslaught* features a whole range of the doublespeak that characterizes current satanist publications. *Onslaught* presents declarations of Aryan supremacy out of one side of its mouth while condemning "hate crimes" legislation as "racist" out of the other. Its contributors attempt to advance their cause of "religious freedom" for the increasingly anti-Semitic, white supremacist, and Nazified religion of satanism. One reference was to a newspaper clipping reporting the case of a Kissimmee man who was charged with sending "satanic" hate mail after he sent out as many as one hundred letters signed with a pentagram and referring to himself as "the Demon." Other clippings feature stories about neo-Nazis in Germany and the United States.

On the international scene, Kerry Bolton, who is listed on the 1992 Temple of Set roster as a second-degree member, is also the founder of the New Zealand satanist group the Order of the Left-Hand Path. According to sources in Australia, Bolton is associated with the white supremacist Nationalist Workers Party. Interestingly, the N.W.P.'s literature pushes the "separation not domination" theme that has become so popular with Third Position neo-Nazi and white supremacist movements. N.W.P. booklets include "Scientific Origins of Racial Nationalism," "Racial Dynamics," and "Racial Nationalism," all written by Bolton. The order offers a correspondence course in satanism for thirty dollars, no refunds. If you complete the course to the satisfaction of the *Collegium Satanas*, and sign the oath of allegiance to Satan, you receive

a certificate of ordination into the satanic priesthood "strikingly printed in black, on red card, suitable for framing."

Bolton obviously did his homework, plowing through the writings of LaVey and Aquino before forming his own order. The O.L.H.P. recruitment literature promotes the model of the Nietzschean superman. (Nietzsche, who urged men to be predators and glorified conflict, violence, and cruelty, is very popular with satanists.) The Temple of Set advertises in Bolton's newsletter, *The Watcher*. A 1990 issue featured an attack on "Zionist Zealots" by one "Elisha ben Azazel" (Azazel being a major figure in demonology), who accuses the Jews of harboring "plans for an Israeli Reich." This piece of hate literature was presented as a protest against "religious fanaticism."

Many satanists now enthusiastically promote the lunatic notion of utilizing eugenics to create a race of elite Nietzschean supermen. Bolton is no exception. In his article "The Coming God-Race" for the satanist publication *Brimstone*, Bolton argues for the need to immediately adopt applied eugenics to give the satanic god-man the needed leg-up over the dreaded ordinary human being. Genetic selection will "usher forth tomorrow's God-race," Bolton rants. "It is breeding of such a 'mighty and renown [ sic ] race' which a Satanic Civilization should give priority to, and eugenics is the means to this end." Instead of Hitler's "excesses"—a favorite satanist euphemism for the Nazi policy of genocide—financial incentives and disincentives, such as subsidies and tax scales, might be used to achieve this goal.

However, it is the increasingly pro-Nazi sympathies of the Temple of Set, the most sophisticated and influential of the "religious" satanist groups, which causes concern among observers of the current satanic scene. Temple of Set membership rosters from 1990 to 1992 revealed that about 20 percent of the members indicated an interest in Nazi-related topics, including the SS, the Ahnenerbe, and Hitler himself. New



Zealander Kerry Bolton and two Australian members listed an interest in "revisionist" history, a common euphemism for Holocaust denial. About 30 percent of members indicated a strong interest in the "runic arts," Germanic and Teutonic mythology, Odinism, and the like, a complex of interests that, while not in and of itself indicative of Nazi leanings, is frequently shared by neo-Nazis and white supremacists.

The current Temple of Set recruiting brochure makes no reference to Nazism or even to Teutonic mythology or Odinism. Although the temple does not have racial or religious exclusionary rules for admission, Aquino's policy of avoiding any evidence of racism or anti-Semitism is consistent with the tactics of evasion and diversion he uses to deflect criticism of the temple's interest in Nazi occultism.

The strategy of sophisticated satanists in regard to Nazi-related occultism can be better understood in the context of another movement with remarkably similar tactics: Holocaust denial. The revisionist movement seeking to discredit the genocide of European Jews by the Nazis has grown to alarming proportions in the past decade. A recent poll by the Roper Organization showed that 20 percent of U.S. high school students and 22 percent of adults think it is "possible" that the Holocaust never happened. "Historical revisionists" are recognized by legitimate scholars to be neofascists and/or anti-Semites trying to disguise their ideology as "objective scholarship." Nevertheless, they have gained increasing success in getting their views aired in legitimate settings such as debates on college campuses. They attempt to get a foot in the door by exploiting well-meaning people's sense of fair play and eagerness to give a fair hearing to both sides of any question. They have been able to place advertisements for their views in college newspapers by bullying editors and university officials into thinking that to refuse them would violate their right to free speech. Deniers even play on the current obsession with "cultural relevance" and "political

correctness" to portray themselves as underdogs challenging the intellectual status quo. In this strategy, the historical record of the Holocaust is labeled the "orthodox" view.

In the concentration and death camps, SS guards taunted prisoners with the prediction that the truth of the extermination of the Jews would never be known—or believed. In fact, a literally overwhelming amount of evidence exists, so much that most revisionists don't actually try to disprove that the Holocaust occurred, but instead mix truths with lies in an effort to muddy the subject so that no one can be sure of anything. To this end they cite nonexistent documents, misquote legitimate sources, and claim that documentation proving the Holocaust has been forged. They engage in phony "investigations" that try to distort clear evidence to mean something else, claiming that gas chambers were used to exterminate "lice," or that the millions of deaths were the result of typhus. They dismiss all the photos and newsreels of bodies as being faked or as showing people who had died of disease or been killed in Allied bombing raids. They refuse to accept testimony from survivors as valid evidence. They claim that the Germans never planned to exterminate the Jews, that the number actually killed was "only" two hundred thousand, that most died of typhus or privations, that the Germans acted in self-defense against Jewish anti-German activities, that millions of Jews actually escaped to Asia and America, and that the whole thing is a hoax by Jews and the Zionists and the Israeli government to extort reparations from Germany. Some even try to claim that the Jews were the real villains.

Holocaust deniers insist that the subject must be viewed "objectively" through the lens of cultural relativism. They attempt to portray the Nazis' persecution of the Jews as merely an extreme manifestation of the widespread anti-Semitism of the time. They deny that the Nazis started World War II, decry the wartime actions of the Allies as equal in barbarity

to those of the Axis powers, and insist that it is simplistic and wrongheaded to indict the Nazis as unequivocally evil.

Through tactics and arguments such as these, the revisionists have begun to make inroads into the thinking of the American public. Leonard Zeskind, veteran hate-group watcher and research director of the Center for Democratic Renewal, has noted a "general shift among 'white supremacists' and extremists away from the political margins into the mainstream by avoiding any overt association with swastika-bedecked or white-sheeted fascist groups." This same tactic can be observed in operation within various satanist organizations. Already socially marginalized as satanists, they know better than to openly associate with violent skinheads and other groups that are virtually guaranteed to gain them unwanted forms of publicity. As Zeskind points out, this confuses observers who can recognize the Klan, White Aryan Nation, and skinheads for what they are, "but who find it more difficult to recognize extremism when it is cloaked in a seemingly rational and familiar garb," such as that of the academic Holocaust deniers. Or, we might add, in irrational and exotic but not immediately identifiable Nazi garb, as in the case of the satanists.

While the Temple of Set's recruiting letter gives little hint of a neo-Nazi orientation, if a potential temple recruit signs up as a provisional first-degree member, the introductory package of materials, collectively known as the Crystal Tablet, should serve to lift the veil. There are numerous references to the Nazis. For example, while Aquino observes that the "Lockean values" of the Enlightenment that inspired the formation of the United States have "served us reasonably well," there is no section devoted to Locke or to others who contributed to the intellectual foundations of America elsewhere in the temple's reading material—but there is plenty on the Nazis and on German philosophers such as Hegel and Nietzsche.

The Crystal Tablet material also includes an extensive recommended reading list, which is separated into twenty-four categories covering subjects such as "Satanism," "Vampirism and Lycanthropy," "Sex in Religion and Magic," and "Occultism in Contemporary Perspective." Category 14, entitled "Fascism, Totalitarianism and Magic," is a masterpiece of obfuscation in the service of providing an introduction to the temple's perspective on Nazism. "Many of the techniques pioneered or perfected by the Nazis continue to be used/abused—generally in a superficial and ignorant fashion—by every country of the world in one guise or another," states the introduction to the reading list. "The magician who can recognize and identify these techniques and the principles behind them can thus control or avoid their influence as desired."

In the 1990 listing under this heading, the Temple of Set includes twenty-four titles, almost all of them pertaining directly to Nazism. In the reviews of this material, the temple refers to criticism of the Nazis as "finger-wagging," and at one point the reviewer expresses reluctance "to get in trouble for even appearing to endorse" a racist or apologist work. Reviews of several works on Hitler convey an admiring tone.

In conflict with the temple's defense that its interest in Nazism is limited to the Nazis' extensive research into occultism is the list's inclusion of books by revisionist writers such as David Irving, a British author of popular histories who has joined the active ranks of the Holocaust deniers. Irving, a self-described "moderate fascist," is an open and ardent admirer of Hitler, keeps a portrait of the Fuhrer on his desk, and has described his visit to the site of Hitler's mountaintop retreat in glowing terms. The temple's review describes Irving's two-volume work, *The War Path* and *Hitler's War*, as an "objective evaluation" of Nazi Germany and its role in World War II. But some critics have described his books as being "closer to theology or mythology than history."

The reading list also includes some curious and obscure

titles that shed light on the Temple of Set's growing interest in eugenics. One example is *The Passing of the Great Race*, by Madison Grant, which is described as presenting "a forceful case for a European race history that would have done credit to Hitler and Rosenberg," although the review avoids an actual endorsement of the work. (Grant was chairman of the New York Zoological Society, trustee of the American Museum of Natural History, and a councilor of the American Geographical Society.) Other titles reflect the temple's interest in "geopolitics" and "metapolitics."

A turning point for the Temple of Set in its advocacy of the study of Nazi occultism came in autumn 1982. On November 8, in a letter to high-level members, complete with photos, Aquino explained that he had spent the early part of October participating in tours of European NATO installations arranged through the World Affairs Council, of which he was a member. On October 19, at the conclusion of the tours, he embarked on "a long-awaited personal quest"—a search for Schloss Wewelsburg, the Westphalian castle appropriated in 1934 by Heinrich Himmler to be the headquarters of the SS.

Himmler had structured the SS very much along the lines of an occult order, complete with a type of religious hierarchy headed by officers who had completed the ritualized candidacy process and had taken special vows. These were, in effect, the high priests of the SS, the Black Order that Himmler envisioned as the elite guardians of the Third Reich and the Aryan race. Their model was the Nietzschean superman.

In 1933, during a political visit to Westphalia with Hitler, Himmler was so inspired by the romantically fog-shrouded atmosphere of the area that he acquired a castle there for use by the SS. According to occult historian Nigel Pennick, Himmler's interest in geomancy—sacred geometry—had led him to believe that "if he could find a significant place for the center of his Black Order, then he could psychically influence the whole of Germany." What he found was Schloss Wewelsburg, a triangular fortress with a history

stretching back to the days when the Saxons fought the Huns. Officially designated an SS officers' school, the Wewelsburg was in fact adapted into a sort of SS monastery where the cream of the order met in secret to engage in occult exercises and rituals. Pagan SS wedding ceremonies and seasonal festivals were also held on a regular basis. A professor of anthropology told Dusty Sklar, author of *Gods and Beasts*, that there was a secret human sacrifice ceremony that involved severing the head of an SS member. This has not been corroborated.

Postwar German governments have attempted to discourage pilgrimages to Nazi sites, and the former site of Himmler's SS "monastery" is not featured on tourist maps. Undaunted, Aquino barreled west on the Autobahn to the small town of Wewelsburg and prowled around until he spotted a directional marker to the perfectly preserved castle, which now serves as a youth hostel. The elderly curator of Schloss Wewelsburg's small museum offered to show him the SS ritual chambers, and Aquino eagerly accompanied him on a tour, which included the Marble Hall and the Hall of the Dead. The latter is a domed structure with a ceiling in a circular brick pattern that produces a whirling, vortexlike visual effect. This is surmounted by a swastika surrounded by runes, and four large windows that focus their light on a central pit. Standing in the small "fire pit" directly below the swastika-emblazoned apex, Aquino found himself the focus of shimmering rays of light from the windows, an effect he describes as "devastating."

It appeared to Aquino, as an experienced magician, that the Hall of the Dead was intended as a ritual chamber, a "magical fountain of youth," which filled him with awe. He had himself photographed there in the central pit, in the uniform of an officer of the U.S. Army. He then obtained permission from the old curator to lock himself in the hall, where he conducted a meditation that he has designated the Wewelsburg Working. A "working" is a magical operation,

often intended to influence the future, and the Wewelsburg Working was certainly a turning point in the brief history of the Temple of Set.

Aquino states that one of the purposes of the working was to "summon the Powers of Darkness at their most powerful locus"—the Hall of the Dead. Aquino experienced what he believed was a vision of the ultimate meaning and purpose of the Temple of Set. In his vision, the temple, like the Church of Satan, had gone through numerous traumatic upheavals because the intellects within these groups evolved in a disproportionate way, and unbalanced minds rebelled against policies, procedures, and controls set up by the leaders. This had culminated in the recent attempt by high-level initiates to "pervert and degrade" the Temple of Set. As he envisioned it, that was what had happened to the Nazis themselves. As they strove to make themselves over into supermen, they had released "less desirable features" of their natural instincts. After all, hadn't 1,235 inmates of a nearby slave-labor camp perished under the lash of their SS masters while reconstructing the Wewelsburg—"grisly reminders of the penalty which mankind pays" for "a certain unique quality"? Aquino visualized the SS ritual hall as "a laboratory for experiments in conscious evolution." Could the Temple of Set learn how to avoid the Nazis' mistakes? Or was the ultimate lesson "that There Is No Way Out—that all initiation is merely Russian roulette in fancy dress"?

Aquino completed his magical meditation with a vision of a new symbol for his reinvigorated Order of the Trapezoid, based on the Church of Satan's inner circle. He then returned the chamber's key to the museum and reluctantly departed for "Frankfurt and the rest of the World of Horrors," his pet term for the nonmagical environment. On his way there, he spent half an hour rooting around in the underbrush of the Kehlstein mountain to find the ruins of Hitler's retreat, the Berghof.

After Aquino's trip to Wewelsburg, the Temple of Set

increased its emphasis on Nazi occultism. Instead of the white supremacist and anti-Semitic philosophy usually encountered in such groups, the temple began to focus on a more militantly anti-Christian stance. But intimations of the group's Teutonic and Nazi "heritage" began to appear more often in its literature. A recruiting brochure from this period stated that the temple's system of degrees included "concepts from the Vehm . . . the Thule Gesellschaft. . . [and] the Ahnenerbe," three groups historically associated with right-wing and Nazi movements in Germany. The Thule Gesellschaft was the Bavarian branch of the Germanen Orden, one of the German secret occultist societies that flourished in the years leading up to World War I. Several of its members would be instrumental in the founding of the National Socialist Workers Party.

The Vehm—also known by various other names and spellings—was a medieval secret tribunal that established a system of "free courts" in the Prussian province of Westphalia for the judgment and punishment of crimes against "God, law, and honor." Sentences of death were pronounced to the accompaniment of terrible curses, and the condemned were immediately hanged, their bodies then cut down and thrown to the wild animals. Those who refused to answer the summonses were sentenced in absentia, and the accusers were given warrants to seek the assistance of other tribunal members in lynching the fugitives whenever and wherever they found them.

The Vehm was a true secret society, whose initiates swore to conceal its secrets "from wife and child, from father and mother, from sister and brother, from fire and wind, from everything upon which the sun shines or the rain falls, from everything between earth and heaven," on penalty of death. This inviolable code of secrecy was closely maintained. Members were required to denounce even close relatives, if necessary. Although hanging was the traditional sentence, some more colorful, though perhaps apocryphal, forms of



execution have been ascribed to the secret courts. One was "kissing the virgin." The accused was instructed to go to the cellar and kiss a huge bronze statue of the Virgin Mary that he would find there. Upon approaching the figure, the unfortunate victim triggered a folding-door mechanism that propelled him into the interior of the statue, where he was cut to ribbons by sharp knives and dropped through a sort of trap-door mechanism into the river below.

As the Vehm eventually spread to other parts of Germany, what began as a genuine response to anarchy and injustice degenerated into an instrument of terrorism, revenge, and judicial murder. As civil institutions began to improve under the later emperors and fears of anarchy began to subside, the Vehm was increasingly viewed as a barbaric throwback. The last official Vehm tribunal was held in 1568. But by then it had secured a place in the annals of German secret societies from which it would inspire imitation for centuries to come.

The spirit of the Vehm returned to haunt a defeated, traumatized, and chaotic Weimar Republic in the wake of World War I. Pitched battles broke out in German cities between the Communist Party and bands of armed outlaws known as the Freikorps (Free Corps), comprised primarily of footloose, embittered young soldiers led by former officers and augmented by "idealistic" students. (Ernst Rohm, the hero of the Third Position neo-Nazis, who would later lead the Brownshirts of Hitler's SA, was a prominent member.) The Freikorps held secret vehmic courts in which they pronounced death sentences, then carried them out to the tune of more than three hundred political murders, including those of prominent politicians such as Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau.

The third Nazi institution much admired by the Temple of Set is the *Deutsches Ahnenerbe* ("ancestor history"), the SS branch whose purpose was to research and reconstruct the Aryan racial heritage. In 1935, Himmler made the Ahnenerbe an official SS organization and appointed Professor Hermann Wirth, a crank occultist, as its leader. Wirth recruited liberally

from the officially banned occult secret societies, and the Ahnenerbe became a haven for crackpot theorists of every stripe. In 1939, the Ahnenerbe became a full-fledged SS department, and Wirth was nudged out of its leadership by SS Colonel Wolfram Sievers, who ballooned it up to fifty separate branches. Sievers's organization "researched" symbols, runes, and highly dubious archaeological projects based on occultist interpretations of German mythology. But there was a more dangerous side to the Ahnenerbe. Its racial investigations led to the infamous medical experiments at the concentration camps, for which Sievers was condemned to hang by the Nuremberg tribunal.

The Temple of Set reading list notes that the complete archaeological, magical, and administrative records of the Ahnenerbe are contained on microfilm in the National Archives Building of the United States. "These papers have never been sorted, indexed, and annotated in detail, but the Order of the Trapezoid has compiled a working index with brief annotations pending a more thorough study," the review notes. "Initiates of the Order who may be traveling to Washington and wish to examine that microfilm are invited to contact the Temple office for a copy of the index."

Aquino says that he deplores the policies of Nazi Germany that resulted in savagery and misery for so many millions of people, yet he has refused to confirm or deny the reality of the Holocaust. In Temple of Set literature, he urges members of the Order of the Trapezoid to observe a policy of "social discretion" concerning the temple's interests. One observer has identified this as analogous to the principle of "plausible deniability" commonly used in the intelligence community, with which Aquino is well acquainted via his work in the military. If this policy is applied to the temple's views on Nazi Germany, there is little likelihood that Aquino or any Order of the Trapezoid member will be caught making outright gestures of sympathy for Nazism such as declaring Hitler

to have been a great man or denying that the Holocaust happened.

It would not be surprising if Aquino did use such tactics considering his expertise in the area of psychological warfare, which he views as "one of the most esoteric concerns of the army." In his hands, the subject can become very esoteric indeed. In the early 1980s, he circulated among high-level temple members a paper entitled "From PSYOP to MindWar: The Psychology of Victory." The paper had been submitted to military journals but was never published. It advocates the use of psychological operations tactics to strengthen the will to victory by convincing the American public of the truth of government policy and protecting it from enemy propaganda.

In addition to utilizing "purely sociological factors which suggest appropriate idioms for messages," MindWar operatives would use coercive measures not detectable by ordinary means. Such measures would include atmospheric electromagnetic activity, air ionization, and extremely low-frequency waves, air of which Aquino considers potentially useful in creating "purely natural conditions under which minds may become more or less receptive to ideas." However, Aquino insists that MindWar was merely "theoretical" and is not an outgrowth of satanism or of the Temple of Set.

Around 1985, Aquino and Lilith were interviewed by Nevill Drury for a book and documentary video entitled *The Occult Experience*. Drury, a perceptive and intelligent interviewer, is obviously troubled by the contradictions he encounters and the "darker forces" he senses in Aquino and his magical partner and wife. He describes Aquino's intellectualism, position of responsibility in the military, sense of humor, and stated aversion to human sacrifice and blood pacts with the Devil. He repeats Aquino's contention that Set represents "a creative force in the universe rather than an enemy figure" and Lilith's denial that Setians are possessed by Set in ritual but instead enjoy merely a "beautiful touching of

minds" with the Prince of Darkness. But Drury senses an "unexplained factor, a missing component" to these two, perhaps signaled by Aquino's belief that mankind is alien to the rest of nature and Lilith's assertion that Setians are "superior beings." And he is troubled by their emphasis on satanic, Nazi, medieval, and demonic imagery.

Drury notes that "the specific links between the Sedan philosophy and the magical practices of the esoteric Nazi group [the SS] led by Heinrich Himmler are difficult to trace but are present, nevertheless." While Aquino states that many aspects of Nazism are repugnant to him, it is obvious that he is powerfully attracted to the Nazis' ability to "summon an extraordinary psychic force," which he contends was misdirected by the Nazis but can be properly directed by other magicians. Drury notes that this contention is coupled with the recurrent satanist theme of the initiated superman who can become an immortal god. In the interview itself, Aquino theorizes that a magician can learn to make everything, even time itself, subject to his will—thereby enabling him to conquer death itself. If he is successful, at death the ego will refuse to die and will remain earthbound but disembodied.

In the video version of *The Occult Experience*, Aquino is shown lovingly fingering a dagger he owns, which he says once belonged to a high-ranking Nazi SS officer. Drury quotes Aquino's Crystal Tablet ruminations about the Nazi version of immortality: "[T]he 'monk-knights' of the pre-war S.S. could disdain, even willingly embrace, the death of the individual human being because the consciousness had been transferred to a larger life-form—that of the Hegelian state—and individual sacrifice towards the strengthening of that life-form would actually contribute towards one's immortality." Aquino's ambitions are not so limited—according to another article in the Order of the Trapezoid's newsletter, *Runes*, he intends to venture far beyond genetic engineering in his quest for immortality, into "manipulating the actual animating force in living things."

Aquino's sidekick in pursuit of the Germanic ideal is Stephen Edred Flowers, Ph.D., the current officiating high priest of the Temple of Set and head of the Order of the Trapezoid. Flowers, who earned his degree in Germanic studies at the University of Texas at Austin, is the author of several books on Teutonic mythology and rune lore under his own name and as "Edred Thorrson." He was attracted to Germanic religion at age twenty when he read Trevor Ravenscroft's *The Spear of Destiny*, a dissection of Hitler's occultism that is also a favorite of Aquino. Flowers avoids the Nazi label by arguing that his version of the Teutonic revival aims to restore the pristine ideals "distorted" by the Nazis under the pernicious influence of Christianity.

The Nazi movement in Germany was influenced by nineteenth-century movements such as Ariosophy, which combined occultism with German nationalism and doctrines of Aryan racial superiority. One of the pioneers of these movements was Guido von List. List founded a religious order called the Armanen, which promoted a magical paganism based on the runes, the ancient Germanic alphabet that occultists credit with mystical powers. Long considered a racist crackpot—his books were popular with the Ahnenerbe—List has recently found a champion in Flowers, who in 1988 published his translation of List's 1908 work *The Secret of the Runes*.

While Flowers enjoys a reputation as a Teutonicist, he has also gained notoriety as a guru of a new breed of Wotan-worshipping satanazis, a phenomenon that is a great source of controversy in neopagan circles.

The Order of the Trapezoid originated with the Church of Satan. Its name derives from Anton LaVey's contention that the anxiety, hostility, and fear inspired by unharmonious angles can engender aberrant behavior. Whereas a complete and perfect triangle or pyramid is pleasing to the eye, its truncated form—the trapezoid—is the most disturbing and intimidating shape that exists, which makes it an ideal symbol

for satanists. In his introduction to the Order of the Trapezoid, Stephen Flowers leads off with an 1834 quote from Heinrich Heine glorifying the image of ancient Germanic warriors rising up in a "berserk rage" to crush the Gothic cathedrals of Christianity. He adopts the Fenris Wolf as another symbol, as does the Werewolf Order. Flowers asserts the superiority of the Nordic or Germanic tradition and implies that the ancient Mediterranean civilization that is the basis for our Western culture arose from an "alien"—i.e., Judeo-Christian—source.

For his part, Michael Aquino explicitly defines Germanic religion as akin to satanism. "The Germanic tradition is also part of the legacy of the Prince of Darkness, hence is appropriate to an Order within the Temple of Set, which embraces all manifestations of the Powers of Darkness in the world," he states. (The temple has advertised itself as the "Temple of Set and Wotan" in some neopagan publications.)

It has been estimated that as many as 25 percent of the membership of the SS held doctoral degrees. This is chilling when we consider that the Temple of Set is currently run by two Ph.D.s—Aquino and Flowers—both of whom have an intense admiration for Teutonic mythology and a deep fascination with Nazi occultism. Michael Aquino has taught political science at San Francisco's Golden Gate University and has instructed numerous classes in the armed services. Stephen Flowers has taught at the college level in Texas, and his books are highly influential among readers interested in Teutonic mythology and rune lore. Lilith Aquino has a degree in criminology. The Temple of Set membership roster includes several other advanced degree candidates who will soon be in positions to teach in such areas as anthropology, sociology, political science, and criminal justice.

Strictly speaking, the Temple of Set cannot be classified as a neo-Nazi organization. It is essentially a black magical order, and its Nazi elements are integrated into an enormous volume of magical, mystical, and philosophical verbiage. The

temple's concept of an Elect serves as a sort of spiritual master race, and it is the whole spectrum of "humans" that occupies the place held by the Jews in the racist theories of the Nazis. It is likely that the temple will continue along this path for the foreseeable future, with its deepening involvement in Nazi occultism hidden behind the euphemism of "social discretion." Will it, like the Fenris Wolf, remain bound by this invisible restraint, or will it one day break free in some unpredictable form?

For this reason alone, the Temple of Set bears very careful watching.

## CHAPTER NINE

# Toward the Millennium

The spread of satanic crime is by no means confined to the United States. On December 30, 1993, the *International Herald Tribune* reported that on Christmas Eve police in Athens had arrested three Greek Army soldiers in their early twenties and an eighteen-year-old woman, all of whom had confessed to engaging in black magic orgies and the sacrifice of two people. The four were charged with multiple premeditated murder "of a particularly heinous nature," as well as torture, conspiracy, arson, and illegal possession of weapons.

The suspects were described as the ringleaders of a satanic sect that had been recruiting young women for sacrifice since 1990. According to police, they had confessed to murdering a fourteen-year-old girl and a twenty-seven-year-old woman, and had planned ritual sacrifice for four more women on Christmas Day. The cult's rituals allegedly involved drunken sex orgies, during which victims were chained and handcuffed, tortured, then stabbed and shot to death.

Greek authorities were extremely concerned over the seriousness of these crimes and the bizarre ritual context in which they had occurred. "Greek public opinion must brace itself for the worst," warned Stelios Papathemelis, Greece's minis-



ter of public order. "For the investigation will go very, very deep. It will cover many key sectors of public life ranging from the military, the church and the educational system, to the influences of television films on today's youth."

In 1989, West German police investigated the death of sixteen-year-old Gordon Breuer at the hands of a schoolmate in an abandoned textile mill just before Halloween. The boys and their friends had been using the empty building for satanic rituals. In 1987, in the German city of Munster, two teens were convicted of killing a girl at her own request. All three had been members of a satanic cult. On February 9, 1994, three German teenage members of a satanic cult were convicted of the strangulation murder of Sandro Beyer, age 15. Hendrik Moebus, 17, Sebastian Schauseil, 18, and Andreas Kirchner, 17, lured Beyer to an abandoned shack after he taunted them about their cult, "Satan's Children." Schauseil and Moebus—who is the son of a state legislator in Muelnausen—received prison terms of eight years. Kirchner was given a six-year jail sentence. The Sekt-Info Office, a German cult-monitoring group, had been getting calls about kids as young as thirteen becoming heavily involved with satanism. Young German "Grufti," or Gothic Punks, who paint their rooms black, wear black clothes, sacrifice their pets, and like to sleep in coffins can be found hanging out in cemeteries, meditating in open graves they dig for themselves. European kids appear to have a penchant for Ouija boards as a point of entry into the world of the occult, and they tend to be markedly superstitious.

In Argentina, a strange cult called LUS has been recruiting teenagers at video arcades, luring them to courses on "bioenergetics" and "biodance." LUS is a UFO cult that has gotten into black magic. Their twist on the gnostic theme is their teaching that children are a reincarnation of evil. Police started taking a serious interest when a seven-year-old turned up dead and mutilated in a way that suggested satanic sacrifice.

Satanism has even been making encroachments into the territory of other black magic traditions. When Philip Carlo, author of *Stolen Flower*, a novel about the abduction and sexual exploitation of children, recently visited Haiti, he discovered a satanic temple hidden away in a little alley at 22 rue Carrefour, outside Port-au-Prince. This was not a Voodoo temple. It was run by black Haitian satanists. Its existence was well known to the local residents. The small building, painted black in sharp contrast to the soft pastels of other Haitian structures, contained a "magic" circle eight feet in diameter, a body in a coffin, and a statue just like one Carlo had seen at the Church of Satan headquarters in Amsterdam.

Canon Giuseppe Ruata, head of the Catholic Church's exorcist pool in Turin, Italy, reports that some individuals in that city conduct satanic rituals in secret. They are evidently of a traditional bent, given that some of them allegedly steal consecrated Hosts from local churches for use in black masses. Graveyards are sometimes plundered. Turin television personality Gianiugi Marianini claims to know several individuals who conceal this "dark corner" of their lives. Conforming to the pattern of satanists everywhere, they tend to become involved with satanism out of disillusionment and frustration. They conduct black masses in basement ritual chambers, complete with the usual accoutrements—upended crosses, black candles, hooded robes—and the novel addition of wooden balls said to contain pieces of human hearts.

Meanwhile, police in Cape Town, South Africa, have been dealing with an outbreak of satanic sacrificial rituals atop Table Mountain, a local natural landmark. A police spokesman claims to know of "at least eleven infants who have been ritually murdered by having their throats cut and their hearts ripped out and eaten." Reports include details of orgies, child rape, human and animal sacrifice, sodomy, and bestiality. The alleged perpetrators are said to be white, middle-class individuals, including parents who "initiate" their

children into the cults by sexually abusing them during black masses.

One man claiming to be an active satanist came forward in an effort to save his four-year-old son from sacrifice by his high priest, who he claims is a well-known figure in South Africa. The man feared that if he refused to give the boy over, he would just "disappear." This witness claims to have engaged in rape and cannibalism. The police say their hands are tied because they do not have proof, due to the oath of secrecy taken by the cultists and enforced by fear of hideous reprisals. People who have broken away and told their stories are now hiding, in fear for their lives.

The witness, who is an Afrikaner from Port Elizabeth, claims to live a double life as a satanist and a member of "right-wing organizations fighting for white, Christian civilization." His rhetoric is remarkably like that of a Christian convert. He says he "accepted Lucifer as my savior" at age sixteen, made a blood pact with the Devil, and has "grown in his love" ever since. Unrepentant about most of his cult's activities, he nevertheless fears for his son and is concerned about the abuse of children in rituals. Getting kids is as easy as "buying bread from the shop," he claims. Runaway teenage girls are the most vulnerable prey. Once obtained, they are drugged and raped on the altar, which he asserts is "a beautiful ritual, like seeing a rosebud open into full bloom." He sports a Baphomet tattoo on his chest—an inverse pentagram with a goat's head. He says that members of the cult are professional people and claims that satanism is on the rise in South Africa because of a loss of faith in "hypocritical" Christian churches.

The legendary British tabloids have long featured reports on the antics of British satanists, including "Christopher Lee" (no relation to the actor), leader of the Temple of the Brotherhood of the Ram, and David Carter, who reportedly claims that his wife, Marlene, is in love with Satan and

has offered to sacrifice herself to the Prince of Darkness in exchange for favors to be granted to her husband.

However, England is also dealing with some of the more serious aspects of contemporary satanism, in both open and clandestine forms. Investigators are hearing similar stories of secret covens—the English tend to use the terms *witchcraft*, *satanism*, and *coven* almost interchangeably—engaging in carefully concealed activities, including the breeding of infants for sacrifice. Geoffrey Dickens, Conservative Member of Parliament for Littleborough, and Dianne Core, national organizer of Childwatch, believe that children are being sacrificed and both have spoken out on the issue. For his trouble, Dickens has received obscene death threats against himself and his family. Core claims that sadistic pedophiles who were "flushed out of America" have joined covens because they offer easy access to children for sex—a not unrealistic charge, and one that deserves closer investigation.

Core told of three children, ages eight to eleven, who were rescued from a coven that had drugged them and forced them to engage in sex acts and to ingest excrement and urine. At one point the children were tied upside down on a cross, a form of torture strikingly similar to that which figured in an incident reported by Arthur Lyons in his book *Satan Wants You*. In 1966, Swiss police in the small town of Helikon broke up a cult called the Seekers of Mercy after a child mysteriously died while under its care. "The Seekers' church was fully equipped, right down to a torture chamber, and the investigation revealed that the girl had been sexually assaulted and brutally whipped while tied to an inverted cross," Lyons writes. "Black candles were found on the premises, and the ceremonies that had been held there were apparently akin to the Black Masses *a la* the Marquis de Sade."

In the case of the English coven, while the children were saved from possible sacrifice, they all wound up in extended therapy, and the after-effects on them and their families have been devastating.

In an article in *She* magazine, a self-described former black witch elaborated on the technical differences between white witches, black witches, and satanists. White witches, she said, claim to use only benign magic to help others, while black witches and satanists openly call on Satan to help them harm others through the use of magic. She described the same deceptive recruitment system that has been heard from many sources in this country. Teenagers are invited to parties featuring free drinks, drugs, food, music, and sex. According to witnesses, transgenerational satanist families who recruit teenagers use their own children to lure the kids to the parties. Candles impregnated with hallucinogenic drugs provide the lighting. After a while the teens are manipulated into having sex and pictures are taken. Blackmail, more sex, and more drugs follow. Formal initiations into satanist groups may involve violent rape on satanic altars or other ordeals. Survivors speak of seeing infants sacrificed. The sex, drugs, and tortures are used to "test" the "worthiness" of the victims to become coven recruiters. One described being tied to a post with the point of a knife at her throat. The naked coven members then danced around her, spitting and snarling obscenities and abuse.

"Devil-worshippers believe that Satan is the master of this world," said one young victim. "When we die he will give us all the powers we need to control the spirit world. After a few rituals you just feel so dirty you think, well, if there is a God, he has no use for me now."

By the time they reach their teens, many youngsters are curious about the occult. A minister who conducted a survey of three hundred fourth-graders found that 87 percent admitted to having "dabbled" in the occult via Ouija boards, tarot cards, or books and videos. Sixty percent of them said they practiced occult rituals and believed they could summon up powers to help them in their daily lives. A thirteen-year-old girl told him that the high priest of a coven had asked her to participate in the Act of Unity, an initiation ritual that involves

having sex on the altar. He told her he wanted a pubescent girl because his coven believed she would provide the strongest power. Another thirteen-year-old girl was drugged and molested by the satanist couple whose children she baby-sat. A journalist tells of a fourteen-year-old girl who was victimized through friends whose leader was an adult male who exploited children. That case was under investigation.

Europe has also witnessed the phenomenon of the criminally connected sorcerer operating at high levels of society. According to the article in *She*, one Doreen Irvine, formerly Diana, Queen of the Witches of Europe, was a prostitute whose satanist high priest lover encouraged her "work" in the belief that the more evil he promoted on earth, the more legions of demons he would command in Hell. (No doubt the money he made here on earth was a contributing factor.) The two traveled around Europe in luxury, as did other satanists who had achieved success in the criminal world.

Irvine, now a born-again Christian, stressed that the "black witches" she encountered were not the benign healers of the current pagan revival. "There is a fine line between witchcraft and satanism," she says. Both carry out sexual rituals that she calls "diabolical." The black witches she knew broke in to churches, burned Bibles, and desecrated cemeteries. "Although I had witnessed evil and ugly orgies in the satanists' temple, I was to see far worse in the witches' coven," Irvine says. A lot of the black witches she knew were sado-masochistic lesbians and homosexuals. She recalled seeing scores of these people taking part in rituals in which they cut themselves and took poisons with no visible ill effects, apparently having built up a tolerance. Irvine says that these witches emphasize excitement and mystery in their recruitment to lure in adolescents, denying or downplaying the more extreme aspects.

Irvine also believed herself to possess supernatural powers and is convinced that she saw Satan at her initiation ritual.

She emphasizes that both the black witches and the satanists were religious fanatics who looked forward to Hell as a place of endless pleasures and believed their master would triumph, come the apocalypse. When asked about a woman who had sacrificed her own infant, she said that the woman's love for Satan was stronger than any alleged maternal instinct. "He was her lover, her master, her idol. What was the taking of a human life, in the end, even the life of her own child, if Satan demanded it as proof of her total submission?"

There have been several rather sensational ritual abuse cases in Great Britain. In 1990, nine Orkney children were taken from their foster homes by police and social workers on suspicion of having been raped by their older siblings. Medical examinations had revealed "chronic penetrative sexual abuse." Three of the children told stories of "bizarre sexual abuse, ritual dancing and music" during nighttime rituals at a quarry. During the rituals a man in a black hooded cloak and mask had sex with the children. Although they came from separate foster homes, their stories were essentially identical. A social worker commented that "the situation looked very nasty unless the children had enormously fertile imaginations, and an extraordinary ability to sustain and elaborate on statements which they had made over a period of time, given the lack of contact between them."

Another case, this one involving the alleged sexual assault of two young girls by their parents and godparents during black magic rituals in Epping Forest, came apart late in 1991, when prosecuting attorney Michael Lawson's ten-year-old star witness admitted to having lied about the extent of her father's participation in ritual activities. She was trying to protect him, she said. Nevertheless, her contradictory testimony rendered her "unreliable" as a witness. Five adults had been charged with rape, indecent assault, and conspiracy. Following the not-guilty finding, they and their supporters within the occult subculture were reported to be celebrating

their victory, claiming that the children had concocted the whole tale from horror-movie videos, and planning custody appeals and lawsuits.

Can such cults really operate in total secrecy for years? British author and photographer Toyne Newton's book *The Demonic Connection* describes the activities of an alleged satanic cult called the Friends of Hecate, operating out of an area in England known as Clapham Wood. There were allegations that the cult had been abducting local pets and farm animals. Several dogs—and in one case, a horse—had been reported missing by their owners and, even more significantly, several owners reported having witnessed unexplained "epileptic-type fits" strike their pets as they walked through a certain part of the woods. Some dog owners also reported that while walking their pets they experienced unexplained physical symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, weakness of the limbs, faintness, and a sense of being in the grip of some invisible force.

Researcher Charles Walker, who investigates UFO claims and the like, says he was invited to a late-night meeting by a shadowy individual with a cultured voice who told him that the Friends of Hecate had originated out of Sussex and was basically a satanist group that practiced animal sacrifice. They liked the Clapham Wood area, the initiate said, because it was a convenient location and had the right atmosphere. Shortly after the meeting, Walker was seriously injured in a hit-and-run incident. He wasn't sure whether he had been given a warning, but he was shaken up nonetheless. Several months later, he had sufficiently recovered to do some snooping in the area, and he came upon a barn on the property of a manor house dating back to the Middle Ages. Slipping inside, he was startled to discover a large mural along the west wall that depicted a satanic-looking figure with snakelike horns and a forked tail, holding a sword and chalice, vividly painted against a backdrop of leaping flames. (The sword and



chalice are the male and female symbols, respectively, of fertility cults.)

Walker says he barely had time to photograph the mural before he was chased off the property by a man with a shotgun. Such encounters are not rare for individuals who attempt to investigate cultic activity. Two investigators of my acquaintance have found their progress blocked by guards driving radio-equipped trucks, wielding guns, and leading large, unfriendly-looking dogs. A detective in a southern state who attempted to check out an alleged ritual site was surprised to find herself headed off by two patrol cars. A teenage girl who had reported being forced to attend rituals in that general area said that local police had been known to drop by. As one private investigator put it, if you are dealing with cultists who have a surveillance crew for their rituals, by the time any cop gets to them all he will find is a bunch of people toasting marshmallows around a "campfire."

The Friends of Hecate cult allegedly included people in positions of power who used their influence to cover their activities. After Toyne Newton had published several articles about the Clapham Wood area in the magazine *The Unexplained*, an anonymous source wrote to him that the group did indeed exist, correctly identifying the name Friends of Hecate, which hitherto had been withheld. The writer said that it was run by two women and a man, the latter a doctor from London. They were holding rituals in the woods and in the barn containing the mural. The informant said it was a very secret group, but that there were "thousands" of low-level members dedicated to protecting the two hundred or so inner-circle initiates within the larger society. As Newton notes, it is not so difficult for a relatively large group of people to assemble at a private estate in England under cover of an event such as a "shooting party," especially if there are substantial amounts of money involved.

Newton also notes that some researchers believe that satan-

ists are involved in certain extreme left- and right-wing political groups, the aim being to destabilize society. He reports on a group called the League of St. George, which, despite its innocent-sounding name, is actually a Nazi group heavily involved in Odinism. Like most ultra-right-wing organizations, it practices an "order through fear" doctrine. Newton is aware of other occultic-Nordic/Celtic-neofascist groups, such as Column 88, and SS Wotan 18, which stockpiles weapons.

Elsewhere in our own hemisphere there is abundant evidence of serious criminal activity linked to satanism and other forms of malevolent occultism. Media coverage of the arrest of Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega in January 1990 gave the American public a fascinating glimpse of the role of superstition, occultism, and black magic both in the political life of Latin America and in the multibillion-dollar illegal drug trade. At the time of his arrest, General Noriega was decked out in occult regalia literally down to his shorts: He was wearing red underwear, which he believed would ward off demons. Around his neck hung a crucifix and a Santeria necklace, and a magic talisman was in his pocket. He had invoked the aid of every magical creed he could think of—Christianity, Santeria, Condomble, Brujeria, Voodoo, Palo Mayombe, even Egyptian magic.

In cultures where the South American drug trade has developed, the belief in the power of sorcery is alive and powerful. Consider the case of Celina Abage of Brazil. In 1992, Celina, her daughter Beatriz, and five other cultists confessed to having kidnapped and strangled seven-year-old Evandro Ramos Caetano, mutilated his body, drained his blood, and dumped him in a forest about four hundred miles down the coast from Rio. The cult leader, Osvaldo "The Warlock" Marceneiro, was among those arrested. Apparently the existence of the cult was no surprise to the municipal officers of Guaratuba, the town where the killing took place, and the mayor subsequently fled just ahead of an angry mob that stoned his house.

According to Beatriz, the ritual was performed "to bring more fortune, justice to my family."

American troops searching Manuel Noriega's Panama City headquarters discovered room after room filled with a bewildering collection of occult paraphernalia—including a bucket of blood—as well as images of Adolf Hitler. The soldiers nicknamed the place the Witch House. Chief Warrant Officer James Dibble, called in by the army as an expert on such matters, noted that most Latin American drug traffickers are found to be devotees of the malevolent aspects of Afro-Caribbean religions such as Santerfa or Palo Mayombe.

But the American public had already been exposed to an even more sinister manifestation of the connection between the drug trade and what some observers south of the border were referring to as the *narcosatanistas*. On April 11, 1989, a new dimension of horror was added to the brutal world of drug trafficking when Mexican and American police uncovered the mutilated bodies of fifteen young men on and near a ranch outside Matamoros, Mexico, just over the border from Brownsville, Texas.

The discovery might never have been made had University of Texas premed student Mark Kilroy not vanished from a Matamoros street early on the morning of March 14. Every year, Matamoros becomes a magnet for American college students celebrating spring break. Mark had disappeared off the street while walking back to the American side with his friends after a night of revelry. An intense search on both sides of the border had turned up few leads, not even after his family posted a \$15,000 reward for information. Jim Kilroy, Mark's father, haunted the streets of Matamoros, handing out flyers, asking if anyone had seen his son. His determination made such a powerful impression that the American authorities turned up the heat under their Mexican counterparts.

On April 9, a group of Mexican federales manning a roadblock outside Matamoros watched in amazement as a member

of the Hernandez clan, a local drug-smuggling family, barreled past them as if convinced he was invisible. The lawmen pursued him down the dirt roads of a farm owned by the family. When they caught up with him, they discovered a couple of hundred pounds of marijuana, a cache of weapons, several fancy cars, and an old caretaker. They showed the caretaker a photo of Mark Kilroy. Yes, he had seen the young *gringo* —handcuffed in the back of a pickup truck. The drug gang members had taken him into a shack on the property. No, he had not seen him again.

Returning to the Matamoros jail where other members of the drug gang were now being held, the federales obtained confessions that Mark Kilroy had been kidnapped and murdered in a black magic ritual. The federales were not taken completely by surprise—seventeen bodies, many showing signs of torture, had already turned up along the Arizona-Mexico border, silenced witnesses to a vicious drug war in which such brutal murders were an accepted fact. But not even that could prepare them for what they found when they returned to the ranch, gang members in tow, to uncover the graves of the victims close to an isolated shack at the end of a dirt road.

One of the first graves uncovered was Mark Kilroy's. It was marked by a piece of wire sticking out of the ground. Its other end was attached to Kilroy's spinal column. The gang had planned to wait until his body decomposed, then pull out the vertebrae to make into a necklace. They believed that such an adornment would hold great magical power.

The gang members said they were just practicing their "religion." Their high priest, a Cuban-American drug lord from Miami named Adolfo de Jesus Constanzo, had told them to "go out and bring in an Anglo male" for a ritual sacrifice to give them magical protection from the American authorities. So they had driven into Matamoros in a pickup truck and cruised the town's main street until they spotted Mark Kilroy. They grabbed him, wrestled him into the truck, and

took him back to the ranch. The next night they wrapped duct tape over his eyes and mouth and took him to the shack, where Constanzo sacrificed him with a machete blow to the back of the head.

But Mark Kilroy was not the drug cult's only victim. A dozen other bodies were found on the property, most of them horribly mutilated. Two more were later found nearby. Judging from the pathologists' reports, the luckier victims had died quickly—hanged, shot, bludgeoned, or beheaded. Others—revenge killings, according to cult members—bore signs of torture. One had been boiled alive. The hearts had been violently torn from some of the bodies.

But it was the object in the middle of the shack itself that had stunned the Mexican police. It sat surrounded by a clutter of empty liquor bottles, cigar stubs, and candles, amid an unbearable stench, at the foot of a bloodstained altar. It was a metal pot, nearly two feet across, filled with an unspeakable stew made up of the severed parts of animals and humans, swimming in blood. In the middle of this brew was all that remained of Mark Kilroy's brain. Two dozen mesquite sticks protruded from this hellish caldron. It was called a *nganga*.

The cult members showed no remorse. As for Constanzo, he had escaped along with four of his followers, including Sara Aldrete, the cult's "witch." A month later they were cornered by police in a Mexico City apartment building. When the shooting stopped, the bodies of Constanzo and his male lover, Martin Rodriguez, were found slumped together in a closet. They had been machine-gunned to death by a fellow cult member, on Constanzo's orders. The rest surrendered quietly.

Adolfo de Jesus Constanzo was a well-educated homosexual sadomasochist with a charismatic personality. He was an accomplished practitioner of the whole spectrum of Afro-Caribbean magic—Santeria, Palo Mayombe, Abaquá. His Cuban mother, who was reputed to have been a priestess of Palo Mayombe, had coached him to become a powerful

*santero*, or priest. Adolfo early on acquired the compelling presence and air of controlled hauteur that characterize the well-trained sorcerer. He had settled in Mexico City in 1983 and had worked his way up to the status of a sort of "psychic to the stars." Powerful people in Mexican politics, high society, and entertainment came to him to have their fortunes told and to seek his magical aid. So did powerful drug dealers—and Mexican police officials. His fees could run into the tens of thousands of dollars, depending on what kind of ritual the client required. Some involved nothing more sinister than a pack of tarot cards. Others required that the client recline naked on an altar while Constanzo performed animal sacrifices over him or her.

Somewhere along the line, Constanzo had studied with a master of the ultimate arts of black magic. This became apparent to his followers when he began performing the horror of human sacrifice. A typical cult ritual began with the high priest dispatching the sacrificial victim, who was then mutilated. The heart was ripped from the body, still beating. Various body parts were boiled in the *nganga*, a black caldron where the soul of the deceased is believed to reside. The resulting brew was drunk by the cult members. During rituals they smoked cigars, drank rum, and prayed to the gods of money and sex. Following the ceremony, lay members of the cult buried the remains. No one knows for sure how many people Constanzo and his followers killed this way in the Mexico City area, but at least eight tortured and mutilated corpses fetched out of the Zumpango River have been attributed to him.

Sara Aldrete was a vivacious and popular straight-A student of physical education at Texas Southmost College. She maintained an apartment in Brownsville and another attached to her parents' quiet suburban home in Matamoros. When the police entered her rooms following the discovery of the massacre at the ranch, they found a blood-spattered altar. Lying

at its base was a pile of bloody children's clothing that has never been explained.

Sara's latent interest in the occult was ignited into a devouring flame the day she met Adolfo Constanzo on a Matamoros street. He was handsome, mysterious, and fascinating, and she was drawn to him irresistibly, intrigued and unafraid. Sara was acquainted with members of the Hernandez family, who were major marijuana traffickers in Matamoros. Serafin Hernandez was studying law enforcement at Texas Southmost. Constanzo saw the Hernandez clan as his ticket to the hundreds of millions of dollars waiting to be made at the serious end of the drug trade. He offered to act as the Hernandez gang's high priest in return for a share of the profits from the estimated one thousand pounds of marijuana the family smuggled into the United States each week.

Sara embarked on an affair with the bisexual Constanzo and became the Texas Southmost unofficial campus expert on the occult. Her favorite instructional and recruiting tool was a horror movie about Palo Mayombe and Santerfa called *The Believers*. She made the Hernandez boys watch it over and over. After the arrests, they told the police that it was Sara who had stood serenely by the side of Constanzo, supervising the rituals of torture and death. She is currently in a Mexico City prison, serving out a sentence of fifty-two years for kidnapping and murder.

Constanzo brought the Hernandez gang to Mexico City and took them gradually through the same initiatory process he had experienced. Begin with the rituals. Get them used to torture. Introduce them to dismemberment of dead victims. Then live ones. Then finally, the ultimate horror of cutting the still-beating heart from the living victim. When Elio Hernandez inadvertently beheaded his own fourteen-year-old nephew, he still let Constanzo cut up the rest of the body and feed it to the *nganga*.

One of the dangers of reporting on such crimes is that

spectators will be simultaneously so fascinated and so repulsed by the extreme violence and grisliness that they will be incapable of making the effort to understand the motivation behind such viciousness. That, of course, is the whole idea. It is a fatal mistake to fall into this trap. Horror at the crime is not an acceptable reason for the abandonment of victims. Defending those victims requires an accurate understanding of what is going on in the minds of the cultist perpetrators.

Part of the horror of the Matamoros killings was the fact that the cult practiced cannibalism. In the magical context, cannibalism is an attempt to ingest the soul of the sacrificial victim through the literal means of eating the parts of the body most associated with the workings of the soul, especially the heart, brain, eyes, and genitals. The sorcerer thus believes he has gained power over the soul of his victim. Constanzo's gang thought that to cannibalize an American victim would protect them from the American police.

Magic is an attempt to bend reality to the will of the magician, for good or ill. The black magician truly assumes the prerogatives of a god—reality is a construct of his consciousness, and he wields the power to dispose of the lives of others. In order for a sorcerer like Constanzo to act as he does, he must overcome any natural inhibition he may have retained to killing, mutilation, excrement, pain, death, and decomposition. In doing so, he will gain power over those who are still subject to that natural revulsion. He must pass beyond all human conception of good and evil and act as the living embodiment of death itself, no longer even recognizing that what he is doing is murder. And he must teach his followers this ultimate thrill of the experience of godhood.

In all likelihood, judging from the testimony of the survivors, that is what the intergenerational satanist criminals who torture and rape children are trying to do: to attain the absolute freedom of absolute amorality through willingness to engage in absolute horror. In order to effectively combat them, we



must learn to channel our revulsion at these acts into compassion for the victims and their families and resolve that such crimes will not evade detection and punishment. If we do not, then the Constanzos of the world will have gained control over our souls as well.

After Constanzo was killed, sociologists and academic religion "experts" first tried to claim he was just a lone, aberrant nut. After the Mexican authorities released copies of Constanzo's notebooks, which included lists of his rich and powerful clients along with accounts of his rituals—written in Bantu, their traditional language—these experts were confronted with the unevadable fact that Adolfo Constanzo had probably forgotten more about the real practices of Palo Mayombe than they had ever known. Most had the good grace to admit it.

But according to criminal justice analyst Robert Hicks's two-part article published in 1990 in *The Skeptical Inquirer*, the Matamoros murders could not be classified as satanic because most of the victims were rival drug dealers, not "innocent people snatched off the street." Hicks portrayed Constanzo as an occultic pack rat who "gathered whatever symbolism and ritual he could to intimidate rivals and his own lackeys." In his view, "no evidence exists . . . of any participation of Constanzo or his group in satanic activities, involvement with a satanic conspiracy, or human sacrifice to propitiate the Devil." The excruciating, obscene tortures and mutilations for the purpose of gaining the protection of demonic beings weren't "satanic." The *nganga* wasn't "satanic." The existence of two distinct cultic operations—in Mexico City and in Matamoros—did not constitute a "satanic conspiracy." Constanzo's rites "belong to Afro-Caribbean religions, such as Santerfa or Palo Mayombe, from which he contrived his own brand of ritualism." Hicks conveys the impression that Constanzo was a "dabbler" who improvised haphazardly, instead of what he really was: a highly trained

sorcerer who, with the skill of a master chef, improvised savage rituals according to the most basic principles of black magic.

Appearing on Oprah Winfrey's show several days after the Matamoros story broke, Texas Attorney General Jim Mattox admitted that American law enforcement officials had not been aware of the prevalence of this kind of "religious craziness" within the drug trade. Mattox recalled attending a symposium on satanism and the occult that had been held in Austin about a month before Mark Kilroy's disappearance. "Frankly, most people were there giggling and not taking it fully serious," he admitted ruefully. "Obviously, one point that we need to make very clearly is that both law enforcement and the general public have got to take these kind of things very serious."

Why do so many people react with giggling disbelief at the mention of ritual, occult, or satanic crime? "We had warned ourselves about this sort of thing many times and still didn't believe . . . because few of us were conditioned to accept the reality of human sacrifice to Satan," observed author Gary Cartwright in an article for *Texas Monthly*. This attitude on the part of outsiders makes such grim secrets easier for cults to keep.

In his book *Blood Secrets*, Isaiah Oke, a former priest of the West African religion known as *juju*, recalls the time he was discussing human sacrifice with a young European anthropologist who heatedly insisted that the rite was no longer performed except in "symbolic" form. She had asked a juju priest and he had told her so. Besides, human sacrifice was against the law. Oke, who had on one occasion been forced to participate in the sacrifice of a British soldier at the behest of an African politician whose description resembles that of Idi Amin—a known practitioner of cannibalism—could only wonder at her naivete. At the same time, press reports were noting that police in the West African nation of Sierra Leone had tightened up security at local cemeteries

following complaints that "witch doctors" had been digging up bodies to use in rituals.

The Constanzo gang's acts of cruelty were rooted in their belief that it was magically important to create as much suffering in the victim as possible. This would impress him with the magician's power and more effectively enslave his soul. This practice is not unique. Oke describes a deliberately cruel sacrificial ritual called the Two Hundred Cuts, which he says is a product of the modern urban style of black magic known as *money juju*. Victims are skinned alive, over a period of many hours, one strip of skin at a time, so that they can carry that pain with them when they go to the next world to intercede with the gods. It was this ritual that Oke says he was forced to perform on the English soldier for the Amin-like "colonel" who wanted the victim to serve as his slave in the spirit world.

The Matamoros incident was not the first time that black magic and drug trafficking were found in joint operation. Officials speculate that employment of Palo Mayombe and similar occult systems as a disciplinary tool is the coming thing among Mexico-based drug lords, who assume the position of all-powerful demigods within their cults. Dr. Carl Raschke has observed that black magic is "a religious ideology that is being used almost like a corporate motivational training program to bond and enforce absolute obedience among criminal groups."

Nor is this sort of activity confined to "the other Americas." I asked New York private investigator David Anderson to what extent South American and Afro-Caribbean magical systems in drug trafficking have moved into this country. He noted that the President's Commission on Organized Crime had reported that Santerfa, Palo Mayombe, and similar cultic groups are being used as a means of controlling drug dealers, particularly cartel groups involved in smuggling cocaine from the Caribbean, Colombia, and Peru.

"They identified it with the Marielito boat people," Ander-

son told me. "A significant portion of the Marielitos were prisoners that had been released from the Cuban prisons. Within the prisons themselves they used Santeria, Palo Mayombe, and other variations of Afro-Caribbean cults as a means of segregating themselves from the rest of the population, giving themselves their own group identity, and as a means of control through fear." Many of the Marielito *narcosatanistas* got into the country by claiming that they had been subjected to "religious persecution" in Cuba. As they fanned out from Miami, the deadly mixture of drugs and malevolent occultism traveled with them, and narcotics agents soon began to see dead bodies of dealers surrounded by the trappings of a Santeria sacrifice. Law enforcement authorities regard this mixture of religion and crime as extremely dangerous because the criminal's belief that he has supernatural protection tends to make him more reckless.

Operating in the New York area, Anderson naturally encounters a large percentage of ritual activity linked to the practices of South American and Afro-Caribbean "folk religions" such as Cuban Santeria and Palo Mayombe, Brazilian Macumba, Haitian Voodoo, and Mexican Brujeria. Skeptics claim that much of the criminal activity allegedly linked to "satanism" actually originates in the "black magic" aspects of these religions. They contend that the term *satanism* properly refers only to beliefs and practices linked to the traditional European concept of Satan, especially as propounded by the Church of Satan founded in San Francisco in 1966 by Anton LaVey. This indicates an ignorance of the basic nature of black magical beliefs and the cross-fertilization between various magical systems.

Far from invalidating the concept of "satanic" crime, the proliferation of the South American and Afro-Caribbean traditions of malevolent occultism illustrates the universality of the phenomenon. Black magic is truly a multicultural practice, and its core concepts are shared by sorcerers all over the world. A recognition of this fact is essential to understanding

the nature of the current resurgence of criminal activity inspired, embellished, or accompanied by occultist beliefs.

Much of the activity in this hemisphere is linked to the drug trade, and occult materials are frequently seized along with other evidence during drug busts. In August 1985, DEA agents conducting a raid on a methamphetamine "speed" laboratory near Denver seized a stash of "Satan-worship material" along with the usual cache of weapons and drug paraphernalia. Then there was the 1988 drug bust conducted by Houston police that netted the largest single cocaine shipment in the city's history. The safe house they raided was filled with assorted "Voodoo" paraphernalia, even an altar topped, incongruously, with a little ceramic figure of the Buddha. They were later to learn that this Buddha figure was the trademark religious fetish of Adolfo Constanzo.

In the crimes he investigates, David Anderson has found that there is no clear-cut line of demarcation to show where Afro-Caribbean religions end and cults employing the European traditions of satanism begin. Ritual sites featuring offerings of ribbons, candles, and dead and mutilated chickens, dogs, or goats may fall clearly enough into the Afro-Caribbean category where animal sacrifice is an accepted practice. But consider the ritual site Anderson examined in the Bronx, in which such symbols were conspicuously lacking, despite the fact that the neighborhood was predominantly Latin American. The site was discovered in a small lot in a relatively public residential and commercial area adjacent to a facility where sanitation vehicles are repaired and stored.

Destruction and decay seemed to be the unifying theme of this ritual site, which was surrounded by a malodorous ring of feces and what appeared to be the remains of dead rats. Anderson observed and photographed conventional satanic symbolism, including a large pentagram made from tree limbs or bamboo, with a circle of reddish stones around it. In the center of the pentagram lay what appeared to be dried herbs and a portion of a dead rat. Just outside the circle an inverted

cross had been thrust into the ground. The gutted remains of candles still rested atop a large concrete slab, apparently left<sup>5</sup> over from a demolition site, which had been pressed into use as an altar.

The entire site emanated a sense of menace. Crudely painted notes declared it to be "a sacrificial alter [sic] for decipels [sic] of the church of satan" and warned intruders to stay away. The cultists declared that they had killed a dog and a rat in order to put a curse on anyone who disturbed the site or tried to interfere with their activities. One sign claimed that a member of the family of someone who had disobeyed this warning had been killed in retribution. The warnings worked. The people in the area were aware that ritual activity was going on, but were too frightened to notify the authorities when they heard what sounded like chanting and observed groups of adults wearing white and red robes gathered at the ritual site.

Law enforcement officials who deal with drug cases are also well aware that child killings in connection with Santeria and other Afro-Caribbean cults are a brutal reality, even if many sociologists have stopped their ears to the fact. To give just one example, in 1986 the body of a newborn baby boy was found near a trash barrel in a park in Connecticut. The infant had been suffocated. After its death its head and face were brutally disfigured. Connecticut police called in an expert from Florida, Dade County Medical Examiner Charles Wetli, to examine coins, food, trinkets, and clothing that accompanied the body. Wetli said the case had "all the trappings . . . of an Afro-Caribbean cult, most likely Santeria," but that the murder was probably meant as a warning to someone rather than as a sacrifice.

Nor is Constanzo's characteristic brand of ritual killing unheard of within U.S. boundaries. Around 1989 there was a rash of killings in the Florida Keys and the Everglades, in which bodies turned up with their hearts missing. A Santeria priest who was consulted indicated that the murders were

connected to Colombian and Dominican drug traffickers practicing an embellished form of Palo Mayombe. If the priest had a more exact idea of who was to blame, he wasn't saying. But Alabama death row inmate James Smith was more than willing to claim participation in a string of similar killings. In 1988, expressing "disgust" with efforts to halt his execution, Smith confessed to involvement in six ritualistic murders, including the decapitation of an infant in New York. He said he was a practitioner of Voodoo and belonged to a cult that employed a "gunga pot" in its rituals.

Despite all this, officials on both sides of the border seem to be in no hurry to institute aggressive prosecution of this kind of activity. It is still much more convenient to pass such cases off as "hysteria." In August 1990, Mexican federales on routine helicopter patrol spotted a marijuana field in a remote mountainous region. They dropped in and started asking questions. Area residents said the field was owned by Olayo Soto Soto, age sixty-five, a third-generation Indian sorcerer. Soto was picked up along with thirteen alleged cult followers, including three minors; they were held on drug, weapons, and homicide charges. Police said they confessed to being Palo Mayombe practitioners and to sacrificing local farmers who refused to lend a hand with the marijuana patches. Agents found traces of blood in the remote caves where the victims were allegedly sacrificed to a statue of a monkey representing a deity called El Amigo (The Friend). Among the artifacts discovered was a statue of the Virgin Mary with her face replaced by a skull.

Soto, however, insisted that he was a good Catholic and that the cave was used for innocent religious festivals. He had been tortured into making the confession, he said. In the end, the cops also backed off, canceling plans to search for a mass grave of as many as thirty alleged victims and insisting that they just didn't know how such terrible rumors could have gotten started.

By now it should be obvious that much of the doctrinaire

skepticism about the seriousness of the problem of satanism and malevolent occultism is based on misconceptions. Foremost of these is the notion that there exists a respectable, legitimate, and benign version of the satanist religion. But most satanist organizations are characterized by a focused effort to destroy all boundaries between moral concepts of good and evil and to work toward the establishment of a society in which all things are permitted.

In order to realistically evaluate satanism's potential for harm, we must learn to take seriously the existence of a religious underground subculture based on tenets very alien to and in some ways diametrically opposed to those by which most of us live. This foreign quality is perhaps the most crucial contributing factor to the reluctance of many people to believe in the existence of satanism and occult-related crime. It is the application of the ostrich approach—"If I can't see you, then you can't see me." If I can't conceive of believing such an idea, then neither can you.

But the word *occult* literally *means* that which is hidden, concealed, undisclosed, kept secret, and communicated only to the initiate. Significantly, it also means that which is beyond the range of "ordinary" understanding and can only be grasped through "gnosis"—through the process of mystical illumination that is the end point of initiation. Occultists, whether benign or malevolent, believe they possess secrets of the universe that can be grasped only through nonrational means.

The temptation to reject the possibility that such beliefs can exist beyond the walls of a lunatic asylum provides an invisible cover for malevolent occultists. Sophisticated occultists habitually spoon-feed carefully laundered, strategically vague, and esoteric-sounding versions of their beliefs to "uninitiated" inquirers such as journalists, academics, and talk-show hosts. When Michael Aquino exhorts his followers to remember that society will allow them to exist only if it



perceives them to be ethical, it is the word *perceives* that we should pay attention to, not the word *ethical*.

Denial of ritual crime is based not only on the natural human desire to dismiss as "unbelievable" crimes that are characterized by bizarre and sadistic forms of cruelty. Criminal acts fostered by malevolent occultism are rooted in a philosophy so alien to normal human functioning that it has to be learned through a form of psychological conditioning that mimics a descent into insanity. Writing of the Matamoros case, reporter Jim Schutze expertly sums up the true nature of the sorcerer, the end result of satanism's beyond-good-and-evil theology:

In twentieth-century terms, he or she, at that point, would be totally mad. And not know it. And think that he or she had stumbled on some great secret. . . . Ultimately, the teaching of a . . . Constanzo is supposed to enable initiates to mix and match elements of madness and sanity, reality and hallucinations, at the direction of a calm and self-controlling will . . .

So are the teachings of a Michael Aquino. Both have the same ultimate end: the hopeless blurring of the lines between reality and unreality, good and evil, life and death. Ultimately, the only reality left to the black magician is power and will. Most people, even those accustomed to dealing with extreme issues of motivation, are not willing to accept that human beings can voluntarily apprentice themselves to such a system and follow it to its ultimate conclusion. However, this is the reality that underlies the survivors' stories of ritual abuse.

Satanism is the one religious belief system under which all things are permissible. While other religions can be used quite effectively to rationalize everything from torture to sexual

perversion, satanism is the only one that classifies these activities as natural. The black magician's "Great Work" is to find his "True Will" and do it, a goal that sounds innocent enough until one stops to ask what happens if one's "True Will" involves murder and mayhem. "Magicians" such as these are, like the mythological Fenris Wolf, bound only by an intangible chain, and they are waiting for the day that chain will break and loose them once again upon the world.